



Engraved by J. Clark, after a drawing by S. Laver, R.H.A.

Killing a Salmon.

THE
ANGLER IN IRELAND:

OR
AN ENGLISHMAN'S RAMBLE
THROUGH
CONNAUGHT AND MUNSTER,

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1833.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1834.

LONDON :

P. SHOBERL, JUN., 4, LEICESTER STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

INTRODUCTION.

I SHOULD never have thought of committing my little Tour to the press, if it had not been for the extreme difficulty which I found, when in Dublin, of obtaining any correct information respecting those parts of Ireland which I intended to visit. I was not fortunate enough to meet with any Irishman who had made at all an extensive tour through the wilder provinces of his native country ; and my inquiries at the principal booksellers' shops for written information were scarcely more successful.

The Rev. C. Otway has indeed published some excellent "Sketches," of two very con-

finest and very distant districts in the North Western and South Western extremities of the Island. And the well-known "Letters from the Irish Highlands of Cunnemarra" convey such valuable information, and evince such talent, as to make every one who reads them regret that the Authors should not have given to the world a more complete description of that little known but most interesting province. There are also, of course, "Guides" enough, and to spare, for the Lakes of Killarney. But, besides these, I know of no modern Tour of any reputation, through even a portion of the districts I have just visited, much less through the whole of them; unless, perhaps, I must still further except the flying notices of the flippant "German Prince."

It is from having experienced and regretted this extraordinary deficiency, that I was first induced to think that even my little mite of information might perchance be acceptable to the Public. I have myself received very great

and varied enjoyment from my Tour, of which however, I dare not hope that my description should convey any thing but a faint impression to my Readers. I shall endeavour to give the Journal of what I saw and did as simply as I can ; in the hope of making it at least *useful*, by pointing out *some* of the many objects of interest which these unfrequented regions contain ; and by practically showing how they may be most easily and profitably explored.

If I at all succeed in this my aim, I feel that my little volume will be of use, not only to the Tourist, who may have his attention thus drawn to a district and people, that will amply repay him for the trouble of visiting them, but also to the country itself, which would greatly benefit by this intercourse; as what it wants above every thing is, *to know*, and *to be known*. But still more useful would be my attempt, and infinitely greater would be my gratification, if only my slight Sketches should serve to provoke some more competent Native Writer to

give a completèr account of this interesting portion of our Common Country.

Before commencing an acquaintance, it is, perhaps, right and proper that some sort of introduction should take place. Allow me, therefore, most gentle and esteemed Reader, to lay before you the principal motives which induced me to make the Tour I have here attempted to record, in order that, if your tastes happen to coincide with mine, we may travel on together, but, if not, you may be warned in time to throw away a Volume not likely to interest you.

My chief motive, perhaps, was a naturally “roving disposition,” which has led me to most parts of the Continent, and has subsequently induced me, to explore almost every nook of my native country, from Land’s End to Cape Wrath, and John O’Groats. I had in the preceding year made a short Tour through the North of Ireland, and I was, therefore, anxious to complete my acquaintance with

the Sister Island, by devoting the whole of this summer to the Southern and Western Counties.

Ireland is at present the great point of domestic interest, and at the same time there is no country in the world about which it is so difficult to obtain any correct or concordant information. I was, therefore, most anxious to have the opportunity of forming a judgment for myself, both of its present state and its future prospects. I longed to study in their native land, the national character, and habits, and mode of living, and mode of faith, of one of the most peculiar and most interesting people on the face of the earth.

I am moreover enthusiastically fond of fine scenery, of which I had always understood that the West of Ireland contains some of the most perfect models that the British Isles can boast. And, though *last* — I am almost ashamed to confess, *perhaps not least* — I must plead guilty to a very strong partiality for Fly-fishing, for

which I well knew that these mountain districts would afford me the most favourable opportunities.

Such, I believe, were my principal objects in making the following Tour; and, Reader ! if all or any of these “delights thy mind may move,” let us lose no more time in starting together.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Dublin—Its Society and general Character—Departure from it—Appearance of the Country, and first impressions of an Englishman — Carlow — Kilkenny — The Coercion Bill—Vale of the Suire—Arrival at Clonmel 1

CHAPTER II.

Clonmel—Buildings—Trade—Environs—Manners of the People—Fishing in the Suire—The Anna—Marlfield Lake—Cahir—Lord Glengall's Cottage—Tipperary—Limerick 14

CHAPTER III.

Limerick—Its Appearance—The Shannon—Commerce—O'Shaughnessy—Limerick Hook—Flies—Castle Connell—Killaloe—Lough Derg—Fishing and Scenery—

Scarriff—Holy Island—Round Towers—Illicit Distillation —Departure from Killaloe—Character of the Lower Irish	32
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

Broadford—Its Lakes and Pike—Return to Limerick— Newmarket—Lakes of Rossroe and Fenloo—Clare— Ennis—Inchiquin—Fishing there—Terry Alts—Gort —Galway	52
--	----

CHAPTER V.

Galway—Salmon Fishery— <i>Lawless</i> Conduct—Galway Festivities—Costello River—Splendid Sport—Spiddell River—Parliament Man	70
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

Return to Galway—Travelling in Ireland—Chaises and Cars—A Country House—Races at Headford—Caves of Cong—Lough Mask—Tuam—Irish Clergy—Educa- tion	95
---	----

CHAPTER VII.

Castlebar—Lough Con—Ballina—Sligo—Lough Gilly —Hazlewood—Ballyshannon—Lough and River Erne— Salmon Fishing	123
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

Ballina—Fishing in the River Moy—Westport—Croagh	
--	--

Patrick—Delphi—Angling in the Lakes—General Description of Cunnemarra—Joyce's Country—The Great Killery—Arrival at Renvyle	150
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

Renvyle—Improvements in Cunnemarra—Splendid Scenery—Kylemore Lakes—Botanical Adventure—Cliffden—An Irish Fair—Mismanagement of Roads in Ireland—Accommodations in Cunnemarra	180
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

Ballinahinch House, Lake, and River—Salmon killed—Irish Heath—Boat-race—Cliffden Castle—Whisky Punch—Abundance of Salmon at Ballinahinch—Roundstone—Voyage to Invermore—Assemblage of an Angling Party	204
--	-----

CHAPTER XI.

A Fishing Lodge in Cunnemarra—White Trout and Salmon—Details of Sport—Scenery—Flies—General Remarks on Fly Fishing—Break-up of Party	229
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Departure from Cunnemarra—Maam Lodge—Lough Corrib—Interval of Repose—Distressing Case of Cholera—Another Scene at Galway—Return to Limerick—Commercial Transactions in Ireland	262
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Leave Limerick — Passage down the Shannon in a Steam-boat — Interesting Labourers' Establishment in Clare — Poor Laws — Scenery of the Lower Shannon — Tarbert — Ballybunnion — Description of the Splendid Caves there	280
---	-----

 PLATES.

Killing a Salmon	<i>Frontispiece to Vol. I.</i>
Lough Duloch	<i>Frontispiece to Vol. II.</i>

THE
ANGLER IN IRELAND.

CHAPTER 1.

Dublin — Its Society and general Character — Departure from it — Appearance of the Country, and first impressions of an Englishman — Carlow — Kilkenny — The Coercion Bill — Vale of the Suire — Arrival at Clonmel

I LEFT Dublin on the morning of May 10, after about a fortnight's enjoyment of its gaieties, of which there is no lack at this season. Indeed, the Saxon, who comes charged with the descriptions of a portion of the Irish press and Irish orators, expecting to find the shops all

closed, and the grass growing in the streets, will, at any time of the year, be greatly astonished at the bustle, and crowd of pedestrians and carriages, always to be seen in the principal thoroughfares of Dublin.

But in the spring especially this city is very full and gay. Many families resort to it from the provinces, who, mixing with the numerous body connected with the Irish metropolis, by their professional or official duties, form a large and excellent society. For two or three months, the town presents an appearance of unusual animation and gaiety. Riding parties and dinner parties are the order of the morning and evening; in addition to which there is a nightly succession of very handsome public and private balls, where may be seen as much female beauty as in any part of the British Isles; while the immense garrison, and the numerous *attachés* of the Government, ensure a plentiful supply of beaux.

Nor want there attractions for visiters of other tastes. Dublin contains many very interesting scientific institutions; and can boast a

number of highly educated, intelligent, and learned men, among her sons. *Its environs are proverbial for their loveliness : and the town itself possesses many remarkably handsome public buildings, as well as some noble streets, intermixed, it must be confessed, with not a few of the meanest houses and filthiest lanes that disgrace the interior of any capital.

Then, the general appearance, and manners, and tones, of the people, the variety and style of the equipages, &c. all wear such a novel and peculiar look in the eyes of a stranger, as to make a ramble through the streets of Dublin uncommonly interesting and amusing to the newly-arrived Englishman. If he have any turn for the observation of character, or relish for genuine humour, it will be his own fault if he meet not with ample opportunity for the indulgence of both. Or, if he be a philanthropist, where can he find such scope for the indulgence of his heart's best feelings ? Where can he acquire such a practical lesson of the wants and the miseries of his fellow-creatures, as in the streets and in the hovels of Dublin ?

But it is not my intention to dwell upon a city that has been so often and so well described. The great object of my present visit to Ireland was to explore its western coast, particularly Cunnemarra, and the County of Kerry, both of which I wished to examine thoroughly and leisurely. Circumstances, however, induced me to proceed first to Clonmel; for which town I started, as I have said, on the 10th of May. It is about eighty Irish miles from Dublin; but, as I did not leave the latter until late in the day, I was obliged to sleep at Carlow, where my evil stars conducted me to a very indifferent inn: I trust, for the sake of future travellers, that a better one exists in so considerable a town.

This day's journey presented few objects of interest, except, perhaps, the pretty little village of Ballytore, situated on a small stream, the Greese, which ~~is~~ said to contain very fine trout. But it was impossible to travel even one day through the interior of Ireland without being forcibly reminded that I was in a perfectly different country, and among a totally

«lissimilar people, from those on the Saxon side of the Channel. The general aspect of the country through which I this day passed, as, indeed, of the greater part of Ireland, has an unusually *bare* look in the eyes of an Englishman, and reminds him more of the interior of France than of the smiling fields of England. This naked appearance arises, in a great measure, from the absence of hedges and hedge-row timber. The usual fence in Ireland is a mound of earth, or, in some counties, stone walls. These earthen or stone walls are very often without any gateway even into the road. When the proprietor wishes to enter into the inclosure, he breaks down as much of the fence as will admit his little cart, and often blocks up the gap with the same car turned up with its shafts in the air.

Then the cabins of the peasantry appear to the newly-arrived Englishman very small, and, alas ! very dirty and comfortless. There is no attempt at ornament in the architecture, nor any symptoms of a wish to keep neat what never could have been handsome. The walls and roof are too

often going to decay, and blackened with the smoke that eddies out of the ever open door. There are no roses clustering round the porch, no jasmine climbing up the windows, nor gay borders of flowers, such as frequently give so cheerful and pleasing an appearance to our rural cottages. In front of the Irish cabin is universally the manure-heap; and, as universally, inside, may be seen or heard sundry pigs, who are every now and then violently ejected by the scolding mother, or by the laughing child; *both* of them guiltless of wearing either shoe or stocking, and *the latter* very frequently as unencumbered with any other article of clothing. Yet out of these small, low-roofed cots you will not seldom see four or five fine tall fellows issue, bending almost double in order to escape under the puny doorway. It is difficult to imagine how they exist in such disproportioned dwellings.

The number of young men, every where seen lounging about, mournfully remind the traveller that he is in a country where employment cannot always be obtained by the sons

of labour who are willing to work : while the crowd of beggars, who surround his carriage at every town, as plainly intimate that there is no fund but charity to which the unemployed, the disabled, and the aged, can have recourse.

The Irish peasantry look like a race of ready-made soldiers. They are not, I think, in general so broad-shouldered as the English ; neither have they the usual stoop of our agricultural labourers. But they are taller in person, particularly well made in the lower limbs, and hold themselves up remarkably well.

As for their dress, they seem to have a curious fancy for wearing in all weathers, hot or cold, a very long frieze great coat, which hangs about their legs, and must, I should think, be very inconvenient, as well as needlessly expensive. Their habiliments, too, except on Sundays, are sure to be sadly torn. Indeed, an objection to *mending* appears to be a prominent characteristic of the Irish. The wife will neither mend her husband's, nor her children's, nor her own, clothes, though a single stitch in time might give both comfort and

neatness. The man will not mend his car, or his harness, or any thing that belongs to him, until absolutely compelled. The roof and walls of his cabin are suffered to go to ruin, until their state forces him to patch them up a little. And, as for his windows, I believe there is not a house in Ireland, a year old, in which straw, or boards, or an old hat, or an old petticoat, may not be seen doing duty for glass.

Ireland, indeed, is a country of *expedients*. They seem never to think of putting proper things to their proper uses, at proper times: but then, when there is a necessity for it, their ingenuity in discovering an expedient, and remedying an evil from a most unlikely quarter, is incomparable. And, with all their privations and sufferings, where shall we find so light-hearted, good-humoured, and kindly a race, as the sons of green Erin, except only where agitating demagogues and priests have infused the poison of party politics and religious animosity into their too facile minds and too open hearts?

But I am far outrunning the lazy pace of my

Ballytore steeds, and must return to look after them.

Near Carlow the country improves much in beauty. The land seems fertile, and well tilled: there are many handsome gentlemen's seats, and, what I was still more pleased to see, a few neat and even ornamental cottages.

The town itself, with its fine river and interesting old castle, affords objects enough for a ramble, but scarcely for description. After perambulating it in all directions, I started the next morning for Kilkenny, in a chaise, that might have *sat for its portrait* to Miss Edgeworth.

The country for some way preserved its cultivated appearance, but gradually became bleaker and less pleasing. There were, however, fine views of Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs Mountains, which the extreme clearness of the day enabled me to see to the greatest advantage. It happened to be the market-day at Kilkenny: and, notwithstanding it had recently been put under martial law, the town was crowded with peasants, in whose

countenances and demeanour I certainly fancied that I observed greater roughness and uncouthness than I had been accustomed to remark among the lower orders in Ireland.

I staid a few hours in Kilkenny, for the purpose of inspecting the city, which contains many objects of interest. There is a very pleasant walk along the banks of the River Nore, above which the Castle of the Ormondes rises proudly. It is well worth visiting.

The old cathedral, also, with its well-preserved Round Tower, is a fine building, into which I unfortunately could not obtain admission.

The town is altogether very irregularly and curiously built, so as to produce a very picturesque effect: but it hardly deserves the character that has been given it, of “the pleasantest city in Ireland.” This title, I suppose, it must have obtained from the former excellence of its society, which has much deteriorated of late years, and is not likely to be improved by the spirit of insubordination lately manifested and established in the county.

Both while in this neighbourhood and in other parts of Ireland the newly-enacted Coercion Bill naturally became a frequent topic of conversation : and, from the almost universal consent of all respectable Irishmen, whom I heard express an opinion upon the subject, I am well convinced that seldom has the legislature passed a more necessary or more salutary measure. Strong and unconstitutional as it may justly appear, it was absolutely required by the unhappy state and prospects of the country. It has, indeed, been truly characterized as a measure of protection to the well-disposed, rather than of coercion to the evil : and its success has been greater even than could have been anticipated. It has not only, in a great degree, put an end to the organized system of disorder prevailing in the County Kilkenny, but has checked the same evil spirit from spreading, as it inevitably and rapidly would have done, into other provinces.

After leaving Kilkenny, the country increased in wildness, as it diminished in beauty, at each step : and the countenances of the peasants, in

this focus of *Whitefootism*, appeared to me stamped with an air of coarseness and ferocity. Passing through the wretched town of Callen, I gradually approached the heath-covered Slieve Naman, over a shoulder of which the road is carried. At the summit of the ascent is a small inn, where I procured an indifferent vehicle to convey me to Clonmel; which was fortunately a descent the whole way.

After traversing the ugly County of Kilkenny, I was greatly struck with admiration, as the wide and rich vale of the Suire gradually opened to my view, closed by the long and varied range of the Glen Patrick Hills. At their feet lay an extensive plain, through which flowed the broad Suire, fertilizing and beautifying the scene :

“ the gentle Shure, that making way
By sweet Clonmel, adorns rich Waterford ”

The hills were mostly clothed with wood, and the plain gave unequivocal proofs of its extreme richness. Afar to my right, appeared the towers of Clonmel: and scattered over the intermediate expanse were cottages and

hamlets, affording evidence of a dense and laborious population, who now cultivated these fertile fields; while more than one ruined castle spoke of a race of chieftains, who, in the olden times, had possessed and ruled this fair domain. To my taste, this is one of the very finest vales in Ireland; and from few points does it look so well as on the descent from Slieve Naman

CHAPTER II.

Clonmel—Buildings—Trade—Environs—Manners of the People—Fishing in the Suir—The Anna—Marlfield Lake—Cahir—Lord Glengall's Cottage—Tipperary—Limerick

AT Clonmel the kindest and most hospitable welcome awaited me : and I was easily persuaded to remain much beyond the time I had originally proposed. This time I occupied most agreeably in exploring the beautiful environs, in occasionally fishing, and collecting information for my future tour.

Clonmel cannot boast much beauty as a town ; although the public buildings, such as the gaol, the workhouse, the courthouse, &c. are good ; and there is a very fine lunatic asylum in progress. The present population is about 20,000 ; not one tenth of whom are

Protestants. The church is handsome ; and is surrounded by a shady and spacious church-yard, enclosed by the old walls, which for a while baffled the wrath and strength of Cromwell. The satisfactory manner in which the service of the sabbath was here conducted, and the numerous and respectable congregation by which it was invariably attended, were highly gratifying to my Protestant feelings.

The great source of the wealth and importance of Clonmel is its situation at the head of the navigation of the Suire, which conveys the rich produce of its plains to Waterford, and thence to Liverpool and Manchester. Its chief trade is in corn, for grinding which there are several very large mills in or below the town. These, as well as many other similar establishments, in the Counties of Waterford and Tipperary, are almost entirely in the hands of the Quakers, a numerous and very wealthy body in this part of Ireland. The success of this thrifty sect proves that fortunes may be acquired, even in Ireland, by industry and integrity. And, if their example have as yet failed to ex-

cite the imitation of native capitalists, it will at least, I think, serve as a stimulus to future speculators, whenever the permanent tranquillity of the country shall encourage the introduction of English enterprise. Besides its extensive exports of flour, Clonmel also contributes great quantities of butter and bacon, for the supply of our manufacturing districts ; as many as five hundred pigs being daily slaughtered in this town alone, during the winter months.

The immediate environs afford many very pleasant drives, which the fineness of the weather tempted me frequently to enjoy. A short distance up the river is Marlfield, the residence of Mr. Bagwell, whose family have represented the county and town in many parliaments. It is one of the best houses in the country ; and is backed by a magnificent bank of wood, which is one of the features of the neighbourhood. A little further on is Knocklofty, the ancient seat of the Earls of Donoughmore, a fine demesne, but indifferent house. And, beyond it, on the opposite bank of the Suire, is the

handsome modern mansion, belonging to Colonel Greene, called Kilmanahan Castle. The timber grows very luxuriantly throughout this vale, particularly the ash, which seems the indigenous tree of the country, not only here, but in most parts of Ireland. There are, also, many other handsome residences in the immediate vicinity of Clonmel, which much embellish the face of the country, and seem to bespeak a numerous and excellent society. And, indeed, I had good reason for knowing this to be the case ; although I was universally assured that it had of late years much fallen off, both in numbers and sociability. I fear that this must in a very great measure be attributed to the many dreadful outrages that have disgraced its neighbourhood, (such as the murders of the Sheas, and of Mr. Hamerton) and to the turbulent spirit evinced generally by the peasantry. In no other part of Ireland have I observed such rudeness of look and manner as in this : and, if the dispositions of the lower orders be not strongly marked by ferocity, and hatred against the upper ranks, I can only

say that their countenances belie them most grievously.

It was impossible not to be struck with the unfavourable contrast of demeanour, which the men of Tipperary and Waterford present to those, not only of the north, but of the west of Ireland. Not a single sabbath or market-day passed without confirming this impression. But I was perhaps most forcibly struck with it, on the occasion of a priest's funeral, which occurred while I was at Clonmel. This priest had acquired great notoriety, not by the exemplary discharge of his ministerial duties, but by his activity and success as a political partizan, at the last election. The whole Catholic population of the town and neighbourhood poured forth to swell his funeral train : and by their appearance, as well as behaviour, certainly conveyed to my mind the most displeasing idea of their characters and dispositions.* But a truce to this disagreeable subject for the present.

Finding myself close to a noble river, of whose harbouring some of the best-flavoured

salmon in Ireland I had every day most satisfactory evidence, I was naturally anxious to make my piscatorial *début*. I accordingly tried it once or twice, under the professional auspices of a very good fisherman and obliging fellow, named Edward Prendergast. The Suire contains abundance both of fine trout and salmon : but many things prevent its being a good river for angling. The constant passage of barges disturbs the fish below the town : and the mills hinder them from ascending above, except in high floods. Then the Quakers who own them take such numbers in their mill-races, (contrary, as I was assured, to law,) that the river will doubtless in a few years be seriously injured. There are besides so many professional fishermen in Clonmel, that the fish are allowed no rest.

Under all these circumstances, I could not anticipate any great sport, especially at this early season : and if, therefore, I mention a single day's adventure, it is chiefly for the purpose of describing a mode of salmon-fishing I have no where else seen practised, although I

have often heard of it. The first day we went out, we each rose a fish, but neither would take the fly: and, though tempted with every variety, they would not rise a second time. Prendergast then tried the worm, with which he laboriously plied the same pool again and again: and at length, after two or three hours' patient toil, gave the triumphant whoop to signify that he had hooked a salmon. He was strong and active; but, at the end of half an hour's severe play, I gaffed the fish, which proved to be a noble fellow, of sixteen pounds in weight, and quite fresh from the sea. I never saw perseverance so rewarded; for I am sure those same worms — and they were no dainty morsel to look at — had been placed at least fifty times before *Salmo Salar's* nose.

This method I understand to be very successful in the spring and autumn; although I must hold it to be a very unsportsman-like mode of angling. The way it is practised is this: three large lob-worms are put on an immense hook tied to a very strong line, about a foot above which is a heavy weight of

lead fixed to a somewhat slighter link, in order that if it get fast in a rock it may first give way. This ponderous apparatus is cast into the water, with a splash enough, as I should have thought, to scare away every fish at all near it; and is then worked gently down the stream. I learned that the great majority of fish, which are killed, not only in the Suire but in other rivers, in early spring and in autumn, are taken in this unartist-like manner.

How singular it is that the salmon will take almost any kind of bait; as the worm, small fish, artificial fly, &c.; and yet that no food of any sort has ever been found in the stomachs of the thousands that have been opened and examined.

I also twice fished the Anna, a small but very beautiful stream, falling into the Suire, about two miles below Clonmel. It was both days too low to admit of much sport: but, earlier in the year, whenever there is a fresh in it, it is said to afford excellent angling. The lower part of its course is broad, deep, and

stagnant, and contains very large pike. But the upper part consists of an alternation of streams and pools, abounding in trout of the finest quality, which occasionally exceed three, four, and even five pounds in weight. I killed a few pretty fish of about three-quarters of a pound, and hooked one considerably above a pound; but the water was much too low for the large fish to feed.

The second day, finding such little chance of sport, I walked up a branch of the Anna, called the Glashaughlin, to explore its very interesting source, which issues, in a very considerable stream, from under a low-arched fissure, at the foot of a precipitous rock, on whose lofty brow stands Kiltynan Castle. Independently of this natural curiosity, the situation is extremely picturesque: and, while gazing on its beauties and capabilities, I could not help picturing to myself what a lovely scene would be formed from such materials, in an English gentleman's grounds — one that tourists would travel miles to see!

To conclude my angling recollections of

Clonmel—I three days fished the Marlfield Pond, an artificial piece of water, made to supply a large distillery, established here by some Scotchmen. It is filled by springs that jet forth from the limestone rock; and is consequently as clear as crystal. It abounds with fine trout; but is the most uncertain lake to fish I almost ever saw. The fish will rise well for perhaps half an hour, or an hour, and then remain perfectly still for a length of time, or the rest of the day. This pond is frequented by a beautiful amber olive fly, on which the trout almost exclusively feed, and which it is scarcely possible to imitate, so as to deceive their practised eye. I think I had the most success with a delicate fly, called the racoon, (from being dressed with the fur of that animal) which was given me by a first-rate sportsman in Clonmel, Captain T. Morton: but only the very finest tackle, and the most careful casting, have any chance of success on this clear water.

Should any one feel interested in knowing what I actually netted, I must refer him to the

list at the end of this volume, which contains a faithful record of the number and weight of the fish I killed, on every day, throughout my tour. I have, in that catalogue, neither extenuated my ill success nor set down aught that I did not fairly put into my basket. I have recorded the small as well as the large fish. I have chronicled the days on which I caught little or nothing, as well as those on which I had noble sport, in order that my brothers of the angle may judge, from my experience, of the points to be selected, and those to be eschewed. This list may differ much from the captivating bulletins of unvaried takes of enormous fish to be found in most books: but I think that every practical fisherman will confess that it does not for that reason the less resemble the checquered scene of good and evil, of success and disappointment, which, as in life, so especially in a sporting excursion, is ever met with in reality.

Whoever takes the trouble to read these sketches will see that I was seldom able to stay as long as I might wish in any one place;

and the intelligent angler will, therefore, understand that I was not only obliged to take my chance as to the state of the water and weather, but necessarily fished every lake and stream in entire ignorance of the favourite flies and haunts of the fish. To these drawbacks I may add, that the only merits to which I can lay claim, as an angler, are an enthusiastic passion for the sport, and an unwearied perseverance in its pursuit. If I may presume to pass an impartial judgment on my own piscatory capabilities, I should rank myself as affording a tolerably fair specimen of the general run of anglers, having a moderate knowledge of flies, &c. and possessing about the average degree of manual dexterity.

I mention these circumstances, not so much to apologise for my list being scarcely so brilliant as might have been expected in so celebrated a district, as to warn any "lover of the gentle craft," who may follow my steps, what sport he may calculate on enjoying at each spot I have described. Should he be a more skilful *artiste* than myself, or be favoured with

better weather, or stay longer at the points I have specified as the most eligible, he will, doubtless, have to record a much more splendid catalogue than mine.

I will only further add, that the accounts of my sport may be depended on, at least for perfect accuracy : in giving them I have drawn entirely from *memory*, not from *imagination*.

But, if I dwell as long on every part of my tour as I have done at Clonmel, I shall scarcely reach the end of my travels.

At length, on Thursday, May 23, I quitted my very kind and estimable friends, in an open car, for Cahir, making a *détour* of a mile to pass through Mr. Perry's demesne, which well rewarded me. Every thing conspired to render it a delightful drive, except the intense heat of the weather.

Cahir is very prettily situated on the Suire, over which it has a good bridge, commanded at one end by a venerable and ivy-mantled castle in a most picturesque state of ruin. At the other end are large flour-mills ; and a little

higher up the river are seen still more extensive establishments of the same kind, belonging, as usual, to Quakers. But the chief boast of Cahir is the adjoining demesne and cottage of Lord Glengall. These beautiful grounds commence at the very town, and extend for about two miles down the river, whose banks are for the whole way well timbered; while still more extensive plantations clothe the opposite sides of the dark Galtees, one of the highest and grandest mountain-ranges in Ireland. In all these woods are a considerable number of pheasants, together with a vast quantity of woodcocks during the winter: the game is strictly preserved, as is also the river within the demesne, and, consequently, it is full of both trout and salmon. Upon these I had meditated a serious attack; but the heat of the weather and lowness of the water unfortunately prevented me from availing myself of the permission given me by the politeness of Captain Chaytor, Lord Glengall's resident agent.

Taking a book with me, I strolled along the river-side, stopping wherever cool shade or

lovely view tempted me to rest awhile ; and a most agreeable stroll I had. There are several points from which the castle at one extremity of the “ watery-glade,” and the Knockmeledown Mountains, at the other, combine with the immediate scenery of rocks, and wood, and water, to produce a most romantic prospect. I enjoyed much this succession of delicious landscapes, until at length I came opposite to the cottage, where I crossed the river. This famous cottage is a low and small, but pretty building, in the style its name denotes, perched on a well-wooded knoll, which is both in itself an object of great beauty, and also commands the most attractive views. This is a favourite spot for *pic-nic* parties, for which a more delightful situation can scarcely be wished ; but the cottage at present stands in need of much repair, both internally and externally. Having satisfied my curiosity, I returned to Cahir by the same bank on which the cottage is built, notwithstanding sundry boards that threatened dreadful penalties for my trespass.

There is a very good inn at Cahir, and, had

the weather been propitious for fishing, I should probably have staid here two or three days. Seeing, however, there was no chance of indulging my *penchant* for the "Gentle Art," I left it the next morning for Limerick, distant about thirty Irish miles.

By the way, I should have mentioned that at Cahir I both saw and heard a famous blind old piper, named Fitzpatrick, who is usually styled "The last of Erin's Bards;" but, I am sorry to add, he was surrounded by too large and too uproarious a party, for me to judge of, or appreciate his talent.

From Cahir to Tipperary is twelve miles. By Captain Chaytor's advice, however, I diverged a little from the direct road, to pass by the demesne of Kilmoyley; by which means I not only gained a delightful shade from a broiling sun, but also enjoyed a view of highly cultivated lands and rich enclosures, divided by lofty hedges, that would have been delightful to look at in any part of England. This is one of the many places scattered about here and there through Ireland, which hint

what *might be* the appearance of the country *if only*——

For the greater part of this stage I passed alongside of the fine range of the Galtees. Their higher peaks are broken, and extremely picturesque; but the nearer views were in general barren, although occasionally relieved by patches of tangled copsewood and purple heather; nor wanted there several gentlemen's seats, particularly about Bansha: so that altogether my drive from Cahir to Tipperary was diversified and pleasing.

The latter town, which gives its name to the county, is but small, and by no means of an inviting aspect. I merely stopped there till I could procure another car to Limerick, a long stage of nearly twenty Irish miles. The horse was fortunately a good one, and the driver intelligent and amusing; but the vehicle was most abominably rough; so as by its intolerable jolting to draw my constant attention to the unusual badness of the road we traversed. There was little natural beauty, either, to divert my attention; the country being in general very flat, with

every appearance of being extremely swampy in winter.

Upon reaching Limerick, I went to Swinburn's Hotel, which, on the whole, I prefer to any of the others; but a good inn is much wanted here.

CHAPTER III.

Limerick — Its Appearance — The Shannon — Commerce —
O'Shaughnessy — Limerick Hooks — Flies — Castle Con-
nel — Killaloe — Lough Derg — Fishing and Scenery — Scar-
riff — Holy Island — Round Towers — Illicit Distillation —
Departure from Killaloe — Character of the Lower Irish.

LIMERICK ranks, I believe, as the third city in Ireland, and contains 50,000 inhabitants. I must own, however, that I was in many respects greatly disappointed with it. The New Town has, indeed, spacious well-built streets, but the houses being all of red brick, and being intermixed with few or no public buildings of any consequence, the general aspect partakes much more of the comfortable than the picturesque; while the Old Town consists of the filthiest, darkest lanes, I almost ever saw in so considerable a city. The suburbs are particularly offen-

sive in, and to, every sense; with more than the usual accompaniment of manure heaps in front and inside of the houses. How the cholera spared one tithe of their inmates I cannot conceive. From the number of well-dressed pedestrians and handsome equipages, which I every day met in the streets, I should imagine the society of the town and neighbourhood to be very good; but, having no introductions, I had not any opportunity of verifying my observation.

The Shannon, upon whose left bank Limerick is built, comes down in a full and rapid stream; which, to my astonishment, notwithstanding the long continued drought and the proximity of Lough Derg, was of a deep red colour. It is crossed by one, long, narrow old bridge, on or near which the much debated "Treaty of Limerick" was signed. But there is a second and remarkably handsome bridge now building, which, when completed, will not only be highly ornamental to the city, but also very advantageous in opening a new line of the most delightful sites for suburban villas, &c.

I was extremely sorry to see so little shipping in this, one of the principal ports of Ireland, and seated on its very finest river, with a water communication through the heart of the country, up to the capital. From the inquiries I made, I believe the chief cause of the commercial decay of Limerick to be its distance from the sea. The tide, indeed, comes up as far as the bridge : but from the town to the open ocean is a long and tortuous navigation of sixty miles, which often consumes so much time as to destroy all the profits of the speculation. Of what an incalculable advantage to Limerick, and, indeed, to the whole western coast of Ireland, would it be, if the discovery of sufficient fuel would enable the application of steam to be profitably extended to it ! But of this there seems at present but little hope ; unless the advance of science succeed in realizing the suggestion of compressing peat to the solidity and nature of coal.

Every brother angler will at once guess that one of my first visits was to O'Shaughnessy's shop. Its present occupier, I found, is a watch-

maker, and no relation whatever to the old man who first made the Limerick hooks so deservedly famous. He is, however, a good fisherman, and keeps good tackle. He also employs a clever young man, who both makes hooks after the original pattern, and ties flies remarkably well.

After laying in a considerable stock of fishing implements and lore at this shop, I paid a visit to a person of the name of Glover, who now employs the identical O'Shaughnessy mentioned by Sir H. Davy; he is son to the old man above-mentioned, who has been dead fourteen or fifteen years. I had a long conversation with him, which was interesting, inasmuch as he may be considered a sort of piscatory classical character; but I was grieved to find that, with his father's skill in his business, he has also inherited the paternal fondness for whisky. He is, in fact, the best, or rather the worst, living example of a confirmed dram-drinker that I ever saw. Mind and memory seem almost entirely gone; although there are, at times, gleams of better things, which hint

how far he has fallen below the character he ought to have maintained: indeed, as Mrs. Glover said, "if he had had only common prudence, he might have kept his carriage!" He mixes the colours, &c. extremely well, and his hooks may be depended on for strength; but he does not, in general, now tie so neatly as he used. However, I frequently in my tour found his salmon flies much the most killing.

The Limerick flies are almost always very gaudy, and have silk bodies; whereas those tied in Dublin are usually of mohair or fur, and much more sober in their colours, though still infinitely more showy than the Scotch salmon flies.

At both shops I was shown the hooks in all their several stages of manufacture. They are at first small straight bars of the very best iron, and of the requisite length, with a rude kind of head at one end. They are first barbed, sharpened, and rounded by the file, and then bent with circular pincers to the proper degree of curvature: they are next steeled by the application of fire and charcoal, and then, after

a little final polishing, are placed on a smoothing iron, heated to 580 degrees of Fahrenheit, which gives them the blue colour and temper ; and are, lastly, immersed in grease, to preserve them from rust. In point of quality, I think there is little difference between them, and Kelly's, of Dublin ; but, in consequence of their forming a somewhat larger curve, and projecting more than his, they are more certain to strike the fish ; while, for the same reason, they do not admit of equally neat tying. They are all of them, however, incomparably superior to the best London hooks, and are the only ones to be depended on for large fish ; but they are dear.

On Sunday morning I attended divine service at the Cathedral, which can boast no beauty either externally or internally ; it was respectably attended. Some of the lower notes of the organ were good, but many very discordant ; and the chanting was indifferent. I afterwards strolled in several directions through the environs, and, from some rising ground to the eastward, had a fine view of the town with its

surrounding plain, unequalled for fertility even in Ireland, and closed on all sides by an amphitheatre of distant mountains.

Being obliged to remain a few days in this neighbourhood, I thought I could not employ them better than in exploring some of the scenery of the Shannon. Accordingly, on Monday, May 27, I drove over to Killaloe, a distance of twelve miles, with the intention of making it my head quarters for a short time. About three miles from Limerick I crossed the Annacotty, now an inconsiderable stream, but said, at certain seasons, to afford very good peel-fishing. Immediately adjoining this river is Lord Clare's demesne, through which I obtained permission to drive. The grounds are pretty and well kept; the house not large, but handsome.

I next came to the delightful little village of Castle Connel, which is the favourite Sunday's excursion from Limerick. The banks of the Shannon are here remarkably beautiful, and are adorned with several gentlemen's seats, the chief of which belong to the Massy family.

I was informed that there is very good salmon-fishing here in the spring, and excellent peel-fishing from the middle of June to the end of July. There being, also, a good inn in the village, and the environs abounding in picturesque scenery, I fully intended to stay a few days at Castle Connel on my return from Cunnemarra, but was prevented by melancholy circumstances that will hereafter be mentioned.

Leaving this sweet spot, I passed through an ugly bog country to O'Brien's Bridge, where I crossed the Shannon; and saw little to interest me, until I approached Killaloe, where I procured very tolerable accommodation at the decent inn, kept by Mr. Gilmore.

Killaloe is a very small town, prettily situated at the point where the Shannon issues from Lough Derg. The steamboat from Portumna, an inconsiderable town at the northern end of the lake, arrives here about four o'clock every afternoon, and, of course, contributes much to its prosperity. Close to the town is, also, a long bridge, which is a great thoroughfare into the County Tipperary. Above and below this

bridge are numerous eel-weirs, which produce a strong current, where very large trout are said to lie. I carefully fished this part twice or thrice, and could^t only see small ones move : but then I must add that the weather was in general so bright as to spoil all angling, except very early or very late.

Lough Derg is, however, the great attraction of Killaloe : and each of the three days that I spent there, I was for several hours on its broad and lovely waters. My boatman was named Ellice ; whom I can highly recommend for his civility, good conduct, and general intelligence. Lough Derg extends from Portumna to Killaloe ; and is, I believe, nearly thirty miles in length. The scenery at its lower end (which alone I have seen) is extremely beautiful : the expanse of water is very considerable, and of ever-varying proportions. The shores are hilly, sometimes almost mountainous, and are ornamented with several castles and mansions, embowered in very luxuriant woods.

I enjoyed this scenery very much, as I paddled along in my *cot*, (such being the name

given to the flat-bottomed boats of this country) and listened to my boatman's stories. Our conversation was frequently interrupted by the delightful music of my reel running rapidly out. The usual excitement ensued, until the quality and size of my prey was ascertained; and I had wheeled up perhaps a huge-mouthed pike, or perchance a red-finned, bristling perch, which is here called a *cobbler*.

Lough Derg is full of pike and perch; as, indeed, are all the lakes and rivers which communicate with the Shannon. It consequently contains not many trout, but what there are, are very large. Amongst them is found that curious variety peculiar to Ireland, called the gillaroo, or gizzard trout, which Sir H. Davy has sufficiently described. I made great exertions to see a single specimen, both here and at other lakes where they exist, as Loughs Mask, Conn, and Melvin; but was invariably disappointed.

The fly-fishing on Lough Derg is worth nothing at all. I tried all the best places with the best lake flies, and each day only rose a

single fish of about two pounds. And though the May fly was on the water in abundance, I scarcely saw any fish rise at that most tempting bait. A few are caught by cross-lines; but this is a kind of angling I never would practise, as I look upon it as only one degree removed above netting. I was much disappointed in having been led by defective information to pass the Augustan era of the May fly in so troutless a place. It could not now be remedied; and I therefore contented myself with committing what slaughter I could among the more plebeian members of the finny race.

Lough Derg is, as I have said, full of pike and perch; the former are in general small, but the latter very fine. The usual way of fishing for them is to row gently along the shores, with a couple of long lines trailing behind the boat, the one baited with a small trout, the other with a gudgeon.

The first day that I tried this sport we fished up the eastern shore, and returned by the western. We had what may be considered very good success, netting altogether eighteen

perch, few or none of them under a pound; and seven pike, which generally weighed about the same; but one of them exceeded thirteen pounds and a half in weight, and measured three feet three inches and a half in length. He was not in good condition, or he would have weighed much more: such as he was, however, when first brought alongside the cot, he looked a huge monster, with his long yellow body, and immense mouth bristling with teeth, so as almost to frighten the young lad who attempted to gaff him. Understanding that this was the largest fish that had been killed in the neighbourhood for some time, I took the liberty of sending it to the very amiable Bishop of Killaloe, who resides within a mile of the town.

By the way, I forgot to mention that my boatman, of whose merits I have before spoken, was a Protestant, the only one of my sporting attendants in Ireland that I remember to have been of that faith. The presence of a Protestant Bishop has here encouraged and formed a small colony of highly respectable Protestants

in the lower ranks. Whether this interesting community will be allowed to subsist, after the nucleus, round which it has collected, be withdrawn, by the operation of the late act, remains to be proved. I trust it may; but I cannot help entertaining great fears, from the vast desert of popery, by which this little Oasis of a purer faith is encompassed.

The day after the exploits I have recorded, I decided on making an excursion to Scarriff, a small village, situated near the end of a western arm of Lough Derg, for the combined purposes of angling and exploring the scenery. Scarriff Bay commences about six miles from Killaloe, where the lake is not less than fifteen or eighteen miles in extreme breadth. The shores of the bay are for the most part well wooded, and its bosom is studded with several islands; among which, Holy Island, with its lofty Round Tower, is the most conspicuous. This branch of the lake has also the character of harbouring a number of large pike. We did not, however, succeed in luring any of these monsters of the deep from their secret haunts,

having killed this day only thirteen pike and perch, which altogether weighed but fifteen pounds.

Illicit distillation seems to be still pursued in this remote nook; and one would think is little attended to by the authorities. We observed, on our voyage, two stills in full work, and so openly situated, that no one who passed could avoid seeing them. The evils, which this illegal practice produces among the peasantry, are so incalculable, that every real friend to the country must wish to see it put down, by as mild, but as effectual, means as possible. The late enactments of the legislature, and the increased vigilance of the excise officers, have greatly checked it within these last few years but I understood it had rather revived again this summer, in consequence of the ruinously low price of corn.

It was close to the very spot where one of these stills was working that a dreadful tragedy occurred, which illustrates some of the collateral evils attending this mischievous traffic. My boatman related to me that a party of men

and women, pursued by some excisemen, put off in a small boat, with the worm of the still on board. The officers repeatedly threatened to shoot if they did not instantly put back: but the party disregarding their menaces, one of the excisemen most unjustifiably fired his piece, and wounded a woman, who bled to death in the boat. The murderer immediately fled the country, and has not, I believe, been heard of since.

At the end of the bay, we ascended with some difficulty, for about a mile up a sluggish, reedy stream,* when we left our cot high and dry, and thence walked another mile to Scarriff, which I found to be a very poor, miserable little village. The *head inn*, also, was unfortunately already engaged by another party: I was, therefore, compelled to take up my quarters at a second-rate *shibeen*. It may be conceived what this must be in such a place. Indeed, I think it was the very worst house I slept at during the whole of my tour.

In using the terms “head inn,” and “shibeen,” it may be perhaps necessary for me to

guard the reader against misunderstanding the first, and not understanding the latter title at all. In summoning before his mind's eye the "head inn" of Scarriff, he must not figure to himself the Plough Inn at Cheltenham, or the York House at Bath, or any of the "head inns" along the North Road. Scarriff's chief hostel consisted, like its worthy second, of a spacious kitchen, with sundry unintelligible cells clustering round it, on the one hand, and of a small parlour, with a still smaller bedroom beyond it, on the other. A "shibeen" signifies an inferior public-house, where whisky is sold; *mutatis mutandis*, what in the modern attic phrase of England goes by the name of a "*kidney wink*."

However, if the accommodation was wretched, and the cuisine detestable, these serious deficiencies were much atoned for by the greatest attention and civility, and most excellent whisky, the produce, I fear, of some of the neighbouring stills.

There being nothing to tempt us to prolong our stay, we were off early the next morning

on our return to Killaloe. In our way we landed at Holy Island, to examine its antiquities, with which, albeit no antiquary, I was much gratified. Its most interesting object is its Round Tower, which is of considerable height, and in good preservation, of the usual form and dimensions. Sixty-five of these wondrous monuments of eld exist, I believe, in Ireland, where alone they are found. They are, many of them, above one hundred feet high, and usually about forty or fifty feet in circumference at the base, from which they slightly taper towards the top; and, when perfect, are covered with a low conical roof. They are hollow, the walls being generally about three feet in thickness. The entrance is seldom lower than fifteen or twenty feet from the ground, and there are frequently marks of five or six stories above it.

Their history has ever been a most fruitful subject of dispute among Irish antiquaries, and, notwithstanding the recent efforts of the Irish Academy, promises yet to continue such. It would, therefore, ill become a Saxon stranger

to offer an opinion, whether they are of Pagan, or Druidical, or Christian origin : but he may be at least permitted to express his feelings of their pictorial effect upon his mind. There are, indeed, few more striking relics of the olden time than these Round Towers. They have every element of the picturesque ; they are in themselves beautiful objects, and are usually in beautiful and lonely situations ; they are associated with ages and races long passed away, and their origin, their destination, their uses, and their builders, are alike involved in mystery.

Upon this island I also found, as is so often the case in Ireland, the ruins of *seven* small churches ; together with a Holy Well, whose green margin bore evident marks of having been recently pressed by votive knees. After leisurely examining these curiosities, we resumed our homeward course, and commenced trolling ; but hardly moved a single fish until late in the afternoon, when, along the eastern shore, I killed thirteen pike, of from one pound to three pounds in weight, besides losing several others.

The next morning, May 31, I left Killaloe,

loaded with more and warmer blessings from my late daily companions than I had usually been in the habit of receiving. I was every way much gratified at this, not only as evincing the kindly and grateful feelings of persons with whom I had myself had every reason to be pleased during our short acquaintance, but also as showing what I might expect during the rest of my tour. Very much of my pleasure, I knew, would depend upon my being on good terms with the future attendants of my various excursions; and I had felt somewhat doubtful how far my Saxon manners would assimilate with Milesian vivacity and distrust. My first experience at Killaloe, however, encouraged me to augur well for the future; in which hope, with one or two trifling exceptions, I was not deceived in the whole of my subsequent tour. I universally found the companions of my fishing expeditions willing, obliging, and civil; ready and anxious to do what they could to promote my amusement and comfort; and extremely grateful for kindness received. Affability of manner and liberality of treatment

will go far to win poor Pat's heart : and if to these you can occasionally add a good story or good joke, he is yours for ever.

The angler and his attendants are necessarily much thrown together in the wild and lonely scenes of their sport, and, to my taste, a large proportion of the pleasure connected with these excursions is derived from the insight thus acquired of the characters, the qualities, the modes of thinking and feeling, of our fellow-men in their unsophisticated state. For natural intelligence, and for innate goodness of heart, I have seldom met with more amusing or more interesting companions of my sport than in Ireland : and, I think, there was but one of them from whom I parted without the warmest expressions of mutual regret.

CHAPTER IV.

Broadford—Its Lakes and Pike—Return to Limerick—
Newmarket—Lakes of Rossroe and Fenloo—Clare—
Ennis—Inchiquin—Fishing there—Terry Alts—Gort
—Galway.

WISHING to vary my route back to Limerick, I took a car from Killaloe to Broadford, a distance of ten miles of a bad mountain road, and not very picturesque. The latter is a very poor village, where I established myself for the day in a moderate country inn. Near it are some celebrated slate quarries ; but my chief inducement in visiting it was to inspect two lakes, very celebrated for the enormous pike they contain.

They are situated rather more than a mile from the village, and are connected together by a short deep channel ; their entire circuit may be about four miles. The shores are flat,

the water dark, with an abundance of rushes and weeds ; in fact, it is just the very place for pike, of which there are said to be an abundance of extraordinary size. Wondrous tales are, indeed, told of a monster killed some years ago which weighed ninety-six pounds ! And, not long since, a man of the name of Crowe, who constantly fishes the Lake, did really kill one forty-five pounds in weight. Crowe and I, however, carefully fished round both the lakes, without succeeding in rousing any of these Leviathans ; I had only two runs of small pike, which both escaped.

By the way, I saw here great quantities of bream, which I had always understood not to exist in Ireland. The lakes, however, of this neighbourhood are full of them ; and immense numbers are taken both by the rod and nets. There are, at any rate, I believe, no minnows in the Irish streams, nor moles among its animals, nor nightingales among its birds, any more than snakes among its reptiles. Pheasants and jays were also formerly unknown, but the former thrive well, where they are properly protected :

and the latter are to be seen, as I was credibly assured, in the woods between Clonmel and Carrick, as, perhaps, in other places.

My success was not such as to induce me to give these lakes any further trial, and I therefore determined, the next morning, to make the best of my way back to Limerick. Such a luxurious invention as a car was not to be had in Broadford; so, hiring a small cart to convey my luggage, I trudged by its side on foot. The distance is about eleven English miles; the road passing for the most part through a barren moorland country, but occasionally affording extensive and fine views over the rich vale of the Shannon. The weather was extremely sultry, and I arrived much heated at Limerick, which made me greatly enjoy a delicious salt-water bath.

The following day, being Sunday, I attended service at the Cathedral in the morning, and was not at all sorry to be detained all the afternoon within doors by the rain, which, after the long drought, at length came down in real earnest.

On Monday, June 3, I took the Ennis coach to Newmarket, a rather pretty country village twelve miles from Limerick, where there is a comfortable little inn. The country we passed through was extremely fertile, and occasionally presented pleasing prospects. My object in stopping at Newmarket was again connected with fishing. About two or three miles from the village are two lakes, called Rossroe and Fenloo, which are almost the only ones in the County of Clare that are not infested by pike. These contain nothing but trout, eels, and roach; which last have only lately appeared there, but are increasing so fast as to threaten to starve the trout out of their favourite haunts. The trout of these two lakes are remarkably fine, few being killed less than from one to five pounds in weight; but, occasionally, they are taken as heavy as ten pounds, though seldom with the fly, but by trolling a small roach behind the boat. The flies used are much the same as for Inchiquin Lake, which I shall hereafter have to describe: only they are a full size larger.

Immediately upon my arrival at Newmarket I engaged the services of one Mick Malony, who usually attends strangers, and with him set out for the further lake, Rossroe. We had some difficulty in procuring a boat, but at length succeeded in obtaining a very good one, kept by a plain, honest fellow, named Hicky. They trolled, while I fly-fished ; but both without success, although the day seemed favourable for our sport, being cloudy and windy, with occasional showers. I moved three large fish, which would not, however, take the fly.

Nothing discouraged, we were early the next morning again on the lake, and fished the whole day, but with much the same result. I tried every variety of flies, yet only rose two or three good trout, and caught a single one; with a few roach. My attendants had five or six runs with the troll, and ought to have killed at least two good fish ; but they had bad tackle and mismanaged them altogether.

From these two days' experience, I am thoroughly convinced that, although there are undoubtedly very fine trout in these lakes, and

an occasional good day's sport may be had, they are not to be depended upon by the angler. To show that it was not merely my want of skill that caused my disappointment, I may mention that a gentleman of the neighbourhood, a very good fisherman, was out the whole of the same day without killing a single fish. Every one concurred in assuring me that these lakes have very much fallen off of late years; which is attributed partly to the extraordinary multiplication of the roach, and partly to a drainage of the water to supply some neighbouring mills.

The scenery about Rossroe is pretty, not more, as is also the country generally about Newmarket; but its chief ornament is Sir Edward O'Brien's fine place, of Dromoland, which every tourist who has it in his power ought to visit.

Finding it mere waste of time to remain here any longer, I took the coach the following morning to Ennis. A couple of miles before reaching it, we passed through the miserable village of Clare, which gives its name to the

county. The only remnants of its ancient consequence are an old castle, near the bridge, now used as a barrack ; and, a little higher up the river, the venerable ruins of the abbey.

Ennis is the modern capital of the county ; and is a rather large town, of the second class, without any apparent commercial activity, or architectural beauty, except the very picturesque remains of an ancient and considerable abbey. The day I arrived, Ennis was in an unusual bustle, occasioned by an election to the surgeonsip of the County Infirmary ; which seemed to excite as much interest as if it had been a contest for the county. This was favourable to me in one respect : for, most of the resident gentry being in the town, I had an opportunity of being introduced to many of them, through the kindness of a well known gentleman of Ennis, whom I had met in Dublin.

I dined the same day, in company with a large and very pleasant party, at his house : when a fishing expedition was most good-naturedly arranged for the following morning, to show me Inchiquin, the most celebrated lake

in this country for trout. It is situated about nine miles from Ennis, near the small village of Corrofin. We drove over in our host's handsome four-in-hand coach: but, as we were a large party, many of whom cared nothing for the fishing, we did not get under weigh until after twelve o'clock; little, therefore, could be done that day.

The country we passed through, in our way to Corrofin, was particularly ugly. The whole of this part of Clare consists of flat limestone rock, covered in general with little or no herbage, and presenting the most desolate appearance imaginable. Yet not only sheep, but even horses and cattle, contrive to find good browsing among these broken crags.

My companions were very kind in pointing out to me the various objects of interest along our route: and the answers I received to some of my questions reminded me very significantly that I was in the *Fatherland* of the Terry Alts. As for instance—"Pray, whose house is that to our left?"

"Oh, that is Mr. Synge's, whose servant

was murdered, and himself so often shot at, two or three years ago."

"Oh! and pray, whose is that, a mile or two further?"

"Why, that is Mr. Blood's, who was so dreadfully murdered about the same time."

"Oh! thank you!"

After travelling this barren and desolate country, it was indeed a great relief for the eye to repose upon the waters of Inchiquin. This is a sweet little lake, about two or three miles in circumference, nestling at the foot of a beautifully wooded range of hills, whose verdure forms the most delicious contrast to the bare limestone rocks, which cover the rest of this tract. On one shore stands an old ruined castle: on the opposite bank is an ancient and spacious mansion belonging to the Burton family, but now converted into a barrack. About a quarter of a mile above the lake, is the very pretty cottage belonging to Mr. Fitzgerald, called Adelphi, guarded, as it were, by the picturesque ruins of an old tower that overhangs it.

At the lake's side were several boats and attendants awaiting our arrival. Among the latter was one, whose real name is Darby Fitzpatrick, but who is much better known by his *sobriquet* of "Sport." This man's skill and keenness as a fisherman I had afterwards many opportunities of admiring; as well as his intelligence, invariable good humour, and civility. It being late, we lost no time in commencing operations; and had pretty fair sport during the few hours we were able to remain. A gentleman and myself, in our boat, killed eleven trout, the smallest of which was above half a pound, and the largest very nearly two pounds in weight; besides a great number of rises. The other boats were not quite so successful. We dined together on an island, and spent a most agreeable evening.

Before leaving Inchiquin, Mr. Fitzgerald, understanding my *penchant* for angling, very kindly invited me to pass a few days at his house, for the purpose of giving the lake a good trial. I accordingly returned the next day, with bag and baggage, to Inchiquin:

where I remained until the following Wednesday.

Every one of these days, except Sunday, I was on the water; and had some good sport, although scarcely so good as I had reason to expect. The weather was in general too boisterous; gentle, steady breezes being much the best for this lake. For the number and weight of the fish actually netted, vide my list at the end of the work; but these were not a twentieth part of what I rose and hooked. I *rose* (for, I am afraid, convenience will oblige me to use this Waltonian misnomer) I rose two fish of at least five or six pounds in weight: and I fairly hooked two others of more than three pounds: but I did not kill a single one of quite two pounds. When the weather and all other circumstances are favourable, Inchquin must be a very pretty lake for the angler; as it contains an abundance of very fine trout, which take the fly well, considering how much it is daily fished.

The trout here are of two kinds, red and white: the latter, in particular, are very strong.

and active ; and, upon being hooked, will often spring a great height out of the water. There are also a few very fine pike, unusually thick, deep, and silvery. One of these, a very handsome fish, ten pounds and a half in weight, was killed during my stay, by a noted and very superior fisherman of Ennis, Mr. James O'Gorman : it had almost the shape and colour of a salmon.

The flies generally used here are of the medium size, with red or brown fur bodies, light gold twist, and wings, either of partridge and rail mixed, or else mallard, with a few fibres of the peacock's breast. There is also a very favourite *dropper*, called the rush fly ; which has a reddish brown body, with wings of a small rail's feather, *not* stripped off the quill. But here, as elsewhere, I found that the trout did not disdain a dark blue fly and a good red palmer ; which, whether in Wales or Scotland, in France or Germany, I have invariably proved to be among the best standard flies. I also tried the troll once or twice, for a short time, and with success : but, " Sport " not un-

derstanding or admiring that mode of fishing, I did not persevere in it.

I was informed that the largest and most pike were in Lough Tadann, close to Corrofin; and I therefore was one day induced to try it : but, having a very bad and unmanageable boat, I was soon obliged to relinquish the attempt. A day or two before, two pike had been killed there, which weighed, the one twenty seven pounds, and the other nineteen pounds and a half. This lake also contains a few very large trout, and an infinity of roach, any number of which may be killed, either with the fly, or worm. There are also several other lakes round Corrofin, which, I believe, would afford considerable amusement to the keen angler : and very tolerable accommodations may be had at the small inn in the same village.

Independently, however, of my fishing reminiscences, I have every reason to look back with pleasure and interest to the few days I spent at Inchiquin. My host was a well-informed and intelligent gentleman, in the fullest sense of the word : and both at his house and his friends'

I met with very agreeable society, obtained much information about the country, and experienced that kindness and hospitality for which Ireland is so justly celebrated. I naturally heard a great many anecdotes connected with the well known Terry Alts, under whose reign of terror, some two or three years ago, the whole frame of society seems to have been completely disorganized. Every gentleman's house was regularly barricadoed; and each gentleman, when he went out, was armed to the teeth.

I soon, indeed, discovered that I was in the centre of the disturbed district. Within a mile on one side was the house of Mr. Blood, who was so barbarously murdered, chiefly through the means of his own servant: and about the same distance on the other side lived the identical Terry Alts, who has given these midnight legislators the name by which they were usually distinguished. He was a quiet, inoffensive man; and the reason why he has supplied a lawless set of marauders so opposite to himself with their distinctive appellation is, that they used,

more out of fun than malice, when executing any of their outrages, to cry out, "Well done, Terry! well done, Terry Alts!"

These outrages have been put down by a strong extra police force. But there is evidently still a very bad spirit amongst the lower orders, and few parts of Ireland appeared to me in so unsatisfactory a state as this portion of Clare—a blessing for which it is mainly indebted to the excitement produced in order to return Mr. O'Connell for this County. I was surprised and shocked to find that the informer, who was himself concerned in all the outrages, but was the chief means of breaking up the system and hanging several of the ringleaders, is still living in the scene of his exploits. He certainly ought not to be allowed to remain in the country. He several times attempted to join me, but I would not suffer him to do so.

On Wednesday morning I gave the lake a farewell trial; when, *of course*, the trout rose better than ever they had done before. After catching six very fine fish in less than two

hours, I bade adieu to my kind and hospitable host, and returned to Ennis.

It had been my intention to make an expedition the next morning to the famous cliffs of Moher, six miles beyond Innistymond; but the weather unfortunately prevented me, which I much regret, as, from the accounts I heard, they must be extremely well worth visiting, especially at this season of the year, when all the varieties of marine birds, and the falcon tribe, are breeding there. Soon after twelve o'clock, however, it cleared up, and I then decided on posting to Galway by Gort, a distance of thirty-four miles.

Leaving Corrofin a few miles to the left, I passed by the miserable village of Crusheen, and through a generally wild, desolate country, in which were only one or two gentlemen's residences and grounds, to relieve a little the monotonous wretchedness of this district. About three miles before reaching Gort, I came to the entrance of Lord Gort's demesne, and obtained permission (neither unsought nor unbought) to drive through the park.

This fine demesne extends chiefly along the western banks of Lough Couter, a very considerable, and still more lovely, sheet of water. The main beauties of the place are, of course, coeval with the formation of the lake, but his lordship has done much to improve them, and has built a handsome castle, in a splendid situation, and in good keeping with the surrounding scenery. I was so much more charmed than I expected with what I saw of this romantic spot, that I fully determined to devote a day or two to its further inspection, upon my return from Cunnemarra, especially as I understood there were in the neighbourhood several natural curiosities connected with the disappearance of rivers in the secondary limestone, which is the principal formation throughout this district.

Gort seemed a considerable town, with broad well built streets, and a spacious, open square. I dined there at a very tolerable inn, and immediately afterwards set out for Galway, eighteen miles. For some way the appearance of the country was extremely ugly, being quite

flat, and for the most part covered with bare rock — no trees nor hedges, the fields being divided by loose stone walls. The only objects of interest in this dreary waste were several dark ruins of castles, those silent but stern memorials of the past, which, so often in Ireland, stand in the most lonely situations, without the least trace of modern or ancient ornamental grounds around them, and seem to plead mournfully for glories gone.

Gradually, however, I caught a glimpse of the bay and the town of Galway, which opened finely to the view, backed by the Cunnemarra Mountains, now swathed in the golden glow of a most glorious sunset. Passing rapidly through a filthy suburb of fishermen's huts, I almost immediately reached Kilroy's, the principal hotel in Galway.

CHAPTER V

Galway — Salmon Fishery — *Lawless* Conduct — Galway Festivities — Costello River — Splendid Sport — Spiddell River — Parliament Man.

GALWAY is a large and populous town, containing above 40,000 inhabitants. The streets are in general narrow and dirty; the houses old, and dark-looking. Altogether it struck me as one of the most peculiarly marked cities I have seen in Great Britain; and both the appearance and modes of living of the people seemed to partake of the same singular character, reminding me much more of a continental city, than of any in our own island, unless perhaps in Scotland.

Here is a venerable old cathedral, as well as a handsome modern bridge, near which are the well built county and city courts, with a

very large, new gaol, not yet completed. These are almost the only buildings of any architectural note to be seen in Galway, except some extensive nunneries, and other religious and charitable institutions. The shops are very indifferent; and it is, indeed, a woful sample of the literary taste of this great city and county that there is not in the town a single bookseller's shop! The only two places where books are at all to be procured are at a watchmaker's! and at a sort of general *emporium pro "omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis."*

Great improvements are at present taking place in the port, government having advanced £20,000 for that purpose. I was happy to see a considerable number of vessels in this harbour, besides a large flotilla of the small fishing boats, which at this season are busily engaged in collecting seaweed, for manuring the potato crops. The sight of these tight little craft entering or leaving the harbour at every tide, and stretching their dark sails across the broad bosom of the bay, interested and amused me excessively.

The bay of Galway is very fine, though completely open to the West. The coast which encloses it to the North is low, and, except in the immediate vicinity of the town, entirely granitic ; while the opposite coast of Clare rises to noble and lofty but bare limestone cliffs.

The town of Galway is built on both sides of the short, rapid channel, by which the superfluous waters of the vast Lough Corrib are discharged into the sea. Across this river there is, as I have said, a handsome modern bridge, and, three or four hundred yards below it, is another very ancient bridge. Halfway between these are situated the famous cruives, or weirs, for taking salmon. The fishery is rented by a person of the name of Keogh, who pays, as I was informed, £350 a year for it. But, as it is a navigable river, he is compelled to leave what is called the " King's Gap," twenty-one feet in width, which of course allows many fish to pass into the lake above. In these cruives are taken great quantities of salmon, which are kept, until sold, in a large pool, supplied with running water ; where it is a most

beautiful spectacle to watch them all playing about.

From the weirs extends a long mill-wall, the favourite stand for fishermen. I easily obtained leave to angle here, and, under the tutelage of a professional artist, who had been recommended to me, tried my luck for an hour or two. My attendant's name was Lawless; and I must confess he could both tie a fly and cast a line in a superior manner; but, as will be seen, I had great reason to be dissatisfied with him in other respects. The style of fishing at Galway did not please me at all. The extent is very limited, being, in fact, confined to a few feet on the wall above mentioned. There are at this season thousands of fish in the river, but then there are so many anglers everlastingly thrashing the water, that they can hardly be induced to rise, except on very favourable days.

I found four or five anglers on the wall before me, and was forced to imitate their example, by persisting to flog the few feet of water I had secured to myself, in the hope that some fresh

run fish might be induced to look at the well-dressed deceits I kept playing in the stream as engagingly as I could. I rose one fish and played another, which escaped by the breaking of the hook, a cork one of Lawless's. Indeed, during the whole time I was there, only one fish was killed, a peel of about five pounds. As this time of the year few or no heavy salmon are running up this river; they are all peel, which, in spring, went down into the salt water, but are now returning, of from three to seven pounds in weight. There were also very few white trout as yet in the river.

It was not a little provoking, after exhausting all my skill and patience for such a length of time with so little success, to look over the bridge, and see the bed of the river where I had been fishing absolutely black with peel. I could only comfort myself with the reflection that others seemed to succeed no better.

Lawless partly accounted for my bad sport by the fact of so many having fished the water before me; and I accordingly resolved, by his advice, to commence the attack very early the

next morning. He promised to call me before daylight, but, awaking about three o'clock, I got up before he came, and walked down to the river side, which I reached just as day was breaking. How great then was my disappointment to perceive, through the morning's haze, an angler already fishing on that very wall, which I had expected to have all to myself for at least an hour or two ! But infinitely was my surprize and displeasure increased when, upon approaching, I discovered that the person who had thus balked my sport was the identical Mr. Lawless ! who, thinking me very safe in bed until he chose to call me, had very carefully fished over the water once and killed a salmon ; and was then engaged in fishing it the second time, after which he intended to wake me, as he thought, without giving a single hint of his morning's employment.

I was indeed provoked to think that the man who was eating my bread and salt should thus be the one to mar my amusement ; and my feelings were even hurt at such an instance of treachery on the part of a brother sportsman.

I shall not easily forget his face on first seeing me. I not only afterwards exposed him to some, whose good opinion was of consequence to him, but think that I also succeeded in making him ashamed of himself before we parted.

I had no sport to put me in better humour : and indeed have very seldom been repaid for getting up at extraordinary hours by any very extraordinary success. I again tried the fishing for a short time after breakfast ; but, soon becoming tired of such monstrous and fruitless labour, employed the rest of the day more profitably in surveying the town and environs. In this I was aided and accompanied by a friend, who kindly invited me to spend a few days with him at his country house, nine or ten miles from Galway ; when he promised to show me a river, the Costello, that would amply atone for my late disappointment and redeem the character of Erin's streams.

I had this night a tolerable specimen of Galway festivities, which, though very annoying to me at the time, may perhaps amuse the reader in description, as illustrative of man-

ners not yet wholly banished from the West of Ireland.

Having been up very early, I retired in good time to bed, with the vain idea of enjoying a long and delightful sleep. Unfortunately, however, just as I was dropping asleep, a gay party rushed into a public room, which was divided by only a thin partition from my bed-chamber, and vociferously called for supper. They had scarcely begun to attack the lobsters and champaign, when into the same room was ushered a second party (I believe, of officers marching through the town) who demanded similar fare. A vigorous firing of champaign-corks ensued from both tables, with most emulative and uproarious hilarity. At length, observing their mutual similarity of tastes, they very naturally combined parties, elected a president, and began the *evening* in real earnest, at about one o'clock in the *morning*.

And now the artillery of corks, and toasts, and fun, and wit, pealed louder and louder. I question not that the whole process of a drunken supper-party may be very edifying to those

concerned therein : but, somehow or other, to an indifferent observer, who is perfectly sober, it does not appear to be altogether the noblest employment of rational beings. Neither does the wit elicited on these occasions seem to such involuntary listener entirely to deserve the excessive admiration with which it is received. Moreover, when this same sober listener has been up at three o'clock that morning, and been kept feverishly awake for several successive hours by this "wit," his imagination may very possibly suggest many places where he could wish his *entertainers* very comfortably quartered ; and none of those places within a hundred miles of the spot they have chosen for their carousals.

The harmony of the evening did not, however, last through the night. It seemed as if Mars had dropped in, to pay his friend Bacchus a visit : for, after drinking as much as they could, some of the party began to amuse themselves with fighting. To settle this properly, they adjourned to a large ball-room, where a scene ensued so utterly disgraceful, that at last even the

landlord and landlady, although not unused to similar exhibitions, interfered to put an end to it, without much success.

One of the revellers, however, felt his honour so grievously wounded, that nothing would heal it, but to get shot in the field. Accordingly it was agreed they were to fight, as soon as ever there should be light enough to see a fellow Christian at the distance of ten paces. The seconds retired close to my room door, to make the requisite arrangements, which I necessarily overheard: and it seemed to be totally through the instrumentality of one, who had alone preserved his sobriety and gentlemanly demeanour throughout, that the affair was finally made up without any fighting. However, it *was* made up: and of course the conclusion of peace could not be ratified without further libations, mixed with the most extravagant expressions of good-will and good wishes, which sounded strangely at variance with what those same lips had so lately vented! This brought the *evening* on to near six o'clock in the morning; when fortunately some of the party were obliged to

start by coach. They accordingly separated : and I soon after, for the first time, sank into a quiet doze, with the conviction, " Well, now I see I have at last really got into Ireland ! "

I must say that independently of this night's scene, I think Kilroy's a very dirty and indifferent hotel, although much frequented. I have been there more than once, and always found it the same. There is much vulgar pretension about it, but very little comfort.

The morning after the scene I have described, being the sabbath, I attended divine service at the cathedral, which is the only place of Protestant worship in this populous city : but seemingly it affords ample verge and room enough for all the inhabitants of that faith. It is a large building, kept in extremely bad repair, both internally and externally : and the very small congregation therein assembled appeared as nothing in the middle of its spacious but gloomy aisles. I thought the singing good, but was not fortunate in the minister whose turn it was to preach.

On walking through the streets afterwards,

I was much grieved to see here, as elsewhere throughout the south and west of Ireland, how completely Sunday is made a day of merchandize: the streets were full of country-people offering their vegetables, eggs, &c. for sale. As for the public-houses, one need not unfortunately go to Ireland to witness that profanation of the sabbath. The promenaders were very numerous, and towards evening became very drunk and very noisy. I was, however, soon deaf to all their noise and riot, having retired early to make up for my last night's *unrest*, and to prepare for starting betimes the next morning to the Costello river.

I left Galway about seven, on Monday morning, June 17. My route lay along the northern coast of Galway Bay, as far as Spiddell, to which village there is a very fair road. Beyond that, all passage for wheels terminates, although the line has been traced out for some way further, and will probably be completed some time or other.

In passing through the outskirts of Galway, I observed several very good houses and sundry

neat cottages on the shores of the Bay, for the accommodation of visitors during the bathing season. Four or five miles from the town I passed the seemingly handsome demesne of Barnagh, which, however, is going to ruin and *to sale*. A little further on is Furbagh, surrounded by fine woods. There was little else to arrest the eye, except the noble cliffs of Blackhead and the rest of the Clare coast, with the lofty islands of Arran in the distance.

At Spiddell I found my friend waiting for me; therefore, after dispatching an excellent breakfast, we mounted two Cunnemarra ponies, well accustomed to the alternation of rock and bog that we had to traverse: and, as long as we only gave them their heads, they never made a false step, whether trotting or cantering, over roads that a nervous man would think it madness to pass in a walk. "A loose rein and a tight grip" is the rule for these animals and these roads.

From Spiddell to the Costello is about eleven Irish miles, of as bad road as may be seen in

“the Seven Counties.” Its own immediate scenery is also very far from being beautiful. The Galway coast is, as I have before remarked, low; and *here* it is totally denuded of trees. Except where there is bog, the soil appears strewed with granite rocks and stones, among which cultivation has worked its way, under the auspices of a very dense and very laborious population, assisted by the proximity of that excellent manure, sea-weed and sea-sand. Their habitations are entirely built of the same stones put together without any mortar, and roofed with sods, so as very often to make it extremely difficult to distinguish them from the granitic boulders with which they are surrounded.

But the more distant views were fine. On the one side we commanded a great expanse of ocean, and a long line of the Clare Coast, as far as the perpendicular cliffs of Moher; with the islands of Arran, distinguishable by their white crags, of scarcely inferior height and steepness: while on the land side rose, at apparently no great distance, the Ballinahinch Mountains, or

Twelve Pins, whose many peaks and varied outline struck me as highly picturesque, giving a foretaste of what their inner beauties must be. I felt, while gazing on them, that I was in Cunnemarra.

Two hours' hard riding through the roads that I have described brought us to our journey's end; and I saw before me the object of my piscatorial dreams, the "fabulosus Hydaspes," the stream of which I had heard so many wondrous stories. I was now about to prove whether they were histories or fables: and I cannot express the eagerness with which I began arranging my tackle.

I had as yet had no success in my favourite amusement, at all to justify the expectations which the fame of Ireland's lakes and streams had led me to indulge: but I was now on the Costello, always said by the comparatively few who knew it to be one of the very best rivers for rod-fishing in the world. No one had fished its waters for the year; the day did not seem unfavourable; and to our inquiries as to our chance of sport, instead of the usual discou-

raging answer, we were told, indeed, that the salmon had not yet appeared in any numbers, but that all the pools were stocked with an abundance of white or sea-trout.

“Bravo!” thought I, as I screwed in my first joint the more rapidly. “And of what size are these white trout?”

“Och! maybe four pound, and five pound, and six pound; and some may be as much as seven pound.”

“Bravo, again!” and I screwed away faster and tighter, and ran my line like lightning through the rings. “And now for flies—will these do?”

“Och! sure then your honour’s got a power of fine flies! Them’ll all do. But, I’m thinking if your honour had only got a grouse hackle and a jay. Ah! them two’s as pretty a pair as could be fished with in this water. And what an illigant rod your honour has got! Is it from England she is? Och, sure then she’s a fine rod, *God bless her!*”—an expression which I have on many other occasions heard most whimsically used.

Thus encouraged and equipped, I commenced operations at the very first pool; and soon saw enough to convince me that this was incomparably the best river for angling that I had ever yet seen.

The Costello is not a large but a tolerable sized stream, issuing from an extensive lake, about two or three miles from the sea. It flows through a plain, in which it has generally worked its way through the superincumbent soil to the granite rock beneath. It abounds both in rapid streams and very large and deep pools, in which latter the fish chiefly lie.

At the lower end of the lake above mentioned, the channel is extremely narrow and rocky; of which advantage has been taken to fix there a strong iron grating, that prevents the fish from the sea ascending any further. Behind this grating are sluice-boards, which keep the lake a foot or two above its natural level, and, by removing which, at any time an artificial flood, if I may say so, can be produced in the river.

The late Sir R. Staples, a most superior

sportsman, took a lease of this river for thirty years. He built a small but very comfortable house on its banks, where he usually spent three or four of the summer months, employing ten watchers to guard the sacred waters from every kind of poaching. These his son still continues, although I understood that he has little of his father's enthusiasm for the "Gentle Art."

The number and weight of fish that Sir R. Staples often killed would seem incredible to any one only acquainted with the streams of South Britain: but I to-day saw quite enough to induce me to believe almost any tale of wonderful sport, if properly authenticated. We began fishing after twelve o'clock, and were obliged to give up before six. I knew nothing of the right flies; and persisted too long in thrashing what I, afterwards, discovered to be inferior pools. We certainly had a good breeze, but it was very cold, with every indication of heavy rain over-head, which every angler knows to be most unfavourable to his sport. Yet with all these disadvantages, we

succeeded in basketing forty-three white trout, of from three-quarters of a pound up to five pounds, and weighing altogether seventy-three pounds, besides losing a vast number more, and rises absolutely beyond all count. Of these, thirty-five fell to my hook, my friend accompanying me entirely for my amusement.

Fishing with two flies, as I usually do, I often hooked two fish at a time, and, if they were large, had great difficulty in mastering them : one of them in that case generally escaped ; but I twice killed two together, each of which weighed above two pounds. They showed great strength and vigour, and, as is remarkable in sea-trout above every other kind of fish, the moment they felt the hook they sprang several times out of the water and darted into every part of the pool. When fresh from the sea and of large size, they are certainly more vigorous even than the salmon ; and, being a very bold and greedy fish, their pursuit is by many preferred to that of any species of angling.

Any brother angler who has met with as

little of such splendid sport as I then had will readily enter into my feelings of astonishment and rapture, which I expressed with a warmth and an energy that much amused those who were with me ; they, however, all concurred in assuring me it was a very bad day for the Costello ; and I fully believe, what they unanimously declared, that, under favourable circumstances, from two hundred to three hundred white trout, of the same size as ours, have occasionally been killed by a single rod in a single day !

Near the head of the river we were shown a couple of young eagles, which a boy had brought in their nest from an island on the lake to a rock near his own cabin, and which the parent birds regularly fed in their new habitation. One of these majestic birds, of the large brown species, kept soaring over her offspring most of the day. I also caught a trout, of about four pounds weight, with a deep gash down its side, which had been inflicted, as I was told, by the talons of this rival angler.

My success this day had been so great as to make me extremely eager to renew the attack ;

we were accordingly on the river by nine o'clock the next morning, and anticipated great sport from our superior knowledge of the river, the flies, &c. The fish generally rose very well in the early part of the day, notwithstanding the unfavourable appearance of the weather; but in the afternoon it came on to blow and rain so tremendously that, although I stood it out bravely to the last, I had latterly little or no sport. Previously, however, I succeeded in killing twenty-seven white trout, which weighed rather more than forty pounds; and two salmon-peel, of five pounds and a half, and three pounds and a half, and which on any other river would have been most capital sport.

We had to buffet a regular Cunnemarra storm during the whole of our ride back to Spiddell, which rendered me so stiff and fatigued the next morning as to compel me to beg for a day's rest; I accordingly amused myself near home.

The Spiddell river is not quite so large as the Costello, and, running with a greater fall, over a rocky bed, does not so much abound in

pools. Neither is it equally famous for white trout ; but I understand that later in the season it affords the better salmon-fishing of the two. As many as eighteen salmon have been killed here in one day by a single rod, without gaff or landing-net ; but I do not mention this as an ordinary occurrence in this or any other river.

It might, perhaps, be nearly as good as the Costello, if preserved in the same manner ; but, whereas in the latter not a single fish has for many years been taken except by rod and line, weirs are set near the mouth of the Spiddell, during a great part of the season, which totally prevent both the salmon and trout from passing into the river except in very high floods.

About two miles up the river is a considerable waterfall, which I strolled along the banks to see, and found it a finer object than I had anticipated. The stream rushes over a fine mass of granite, about thirty or forty feet high, into a deep black basin, in whose boiling caldron the salmon may be seen vainly toiling to force their way up an insurmountable obstacle. The late rains had swelled the river

considerably ; and it came tumbling and tossing, and foaming and roaring over the precipice, in very heroic style.

After our day's rest we started very early for the Costello ; and, under the impression of the immense havoc we must commit after the late flood, took a horse and panniers with us, to convey back our scaly prey. Such, however, is the uncertainty of our art, that, even in this river, which I knew to be absolutely swarming with the greediest of all fish, I got very few rises, and during the whole day only killed three trout ! My bad success was chiefly attributable to the want of wind, and also partly to more rain being evidently over-head : but still, *in the Costello*, they ought under any circumstances to have risen much better. Our disappointment was great ; and the man with the panniers so shared the general feeling of shame, that he declared he would not go home with his empty baskets until nightfall.

By the way, this man, who had accompanied us in each of our excursions — and an honest, obliging, good fellow he was — had but lately

returned from London, where he had been summoned to attend before an Election Committee ; in consequence of which he was called by his comrades, in joke, the "Parliament Man." He had been employed on the bold adventure of serving some of Martin's tenantry with notices at the last election. It was to prove this service that he had been summoned ; and I must confess that he came back with no very exalted idea of the intelligence or fair dealing of that section of the "Collective Wisdom" before whom he appeared.

I heard that some discredit was attempted to be thrown upon his testimony by the opposite party, because he was not very accurate in his knowledge of the number of miles between different places, or of the exact time of day he was at each house. This may all seem very suspicious to gentlemen who carry watches in their pockets, to which they are in the constant habit of referring, and who cannot stir from home without seeing a milestone staring them in the face. But, to a Cunnemarra man, who never saw a milestone in his life, and who has no

means of knowing what o'clock it is, from year's end to year's end, except when he greets a chance-met gentleman with the universal question, "Please your honour, what time of day is it?"—to him the ideas of time and distance are necessarily very confused; this fact must be so familiar to any one at all acquainted with the mountaineers either of Scotland or Ireland, that I much wonder that the committee expected any great accuracy on such subjects from this man.

CHAPTER VI.

Return to Galway — Travelling in Ireland — Chaises and Cars — A Country House — Races at Headford — Caves of Cong — Lough Mask — Tuam — Irish Clergy — Education.

My last day's ill-success determined me not to molest the Costello any more for the present; but I left it with the intention of renewing my acquaintance with it in about another month; when, I was assured, the salmon would be almost as plentiful as the white trout.

Accordingly, the next morning, after taking leave of my very kind host and hostess, I drove over to my old quarters at Galway; and the following day took a chaise to a friend's house, about sixteen miles off, where I intended to remain a few days and complete my arrangements for the tour of Cunnemarra.

I had a very indifferent chaise, worse driver,

and still worse horses ; consequently, though the road was nearly level the whole way, it took me between four and five hours to accomplish the stage.

Post-chaises are, perhaps, at present, the most deficient and most discreditable articles connected with Irish travelling. Even when handsome at first, which is by no means always the case, they are so woefully neglected, that they soon “fall into the sere and yellow leaf.” They are left out in the open inn-yard, unprotected, and unwashed from the last journey’s dirt. Very soon, under such treatment, the paint gets rubbed off, and the work rusty ; the lining gets damp and moth-eaten ; and the outside leather torn and ripped up. Few, therefore, travel by them, except in bad weather, but naturally prefer the much more comfortable jaunting car.

An Irish car, especially an outside one, if only it be tolerably well made, and have the necessary accompaniments of a good horse and driver, is the pleasantest and most independent mode of travelling possible. You can see the country perfectly ; can jump off and on without

stopping the vehicle ; and can chat at your ease with the driver, from whom you may almost always depend upon gleaning information and amusement. These cars are to be had every where through Ireland ; the price varying from six-pence to ten-pence per mile ; but eight-pence is the usual charge, as one shilling per mile is the price of a post-chaise. The coaches are also greatly improved of late years, so that on most of the great roads there is now very good travelling by them.

I at length reached my journey's end, with my miserable machine, and received a true Irish welcome from most warm-hearted and excellent friends.

The country I had passed through, after leaving Galway, was devoid of all interest or beauty, being flat, boggy, and stony, and as unencumbered with trees as an American settler could wish. I was, therefore, the more agreeably struck with the contrast, on turning into my friend's well-timbered demesne. Nature has done much in rearing opposite to the house a noble hill, the only one within many miles.

And this beautiful hill the judicious hand of Art has clothed with very extensive plantations, on which the eye ever reposes with pleasure. At the foot of the hill, and about a mile from the present residence, is the ancient castle of the family, a picturesque old building, and embowered in such very magnificent timber as almost to make one regret that a site in its neighbourhood had not been preferred for the modern mansion.

In this spot I spent a most agreeable week, enjoying all the pleasures which delightful society, the intercourse of congenial and cultivated minds, and most exquisite music, could supply. In the morning, we usually either rode, or strolled to some point of interest. The surrounding country is certainly not pretty, except perhaps towards Headford, but the grounds are very handsome, and sufficiently extensive for many a lengthened ramble.

The old castle before mentioned was a frequent point of attraction; and more than once I scaled the wooded height that overhangs it, from whose summit is a very commanding

prospect. There are no rival hills to confine the view. On all sides lies a vast, bare, black plain, except where to the westward are seen the Cunnemarra Mountains, rising from behind the waters of Lough Corrib, with the conical summit of Croagh Patrick peering above their chain. The extreme grandeur of this mountain-range would at any time have riveted my attention; but I now regarded their dark and broken masses with the more interest, from hoping so soon to penetrate into their most secluded fastnesses. Long and well did I examine with my telescope every pass that leads into their gloomy bosoms; and, from each glimpse that I thus caught of their romantic features, gathered fresh ardour for the enterprise.

The hill on which I stood has long been famed in this neighbourhood as a favourite resort of "the Good People," or fairies, and it is said to be even yet haunted by Fanvara, their king, who takes the family of my host under his especial protection. And long may the viewless dweller of the hill continue to watch

over the mansion, where high-bred politeness and true Irish hospitality have found a home. Long may the tiny monarch of the green woodland guard these halls, ever graced by beauty, and not seldom echoing to the sweetest notes of melody.

“ So may the glowworm’s glimmering light
Thy tiny footsteps lead
To some new region of delight,
Unknown to mortal tread! —
And be thy acorn goblet fill’d
With heaven’s ambrosial dew,
From sweetest, freshest flowers distill’d,
That shed fresh sweets for you !”

I should have been delighted to make Fanvara’s acquaintance, but, alas ! he appeared not to my ungifted eyes, although I was beneath the shade he loves, both in the heat of day, and also nearer his own midnight hour.

One morning, soon after my arrival, we drove over to Headford, to witness some hunters’ races. The country about Headford is rather pretty — at least for this part of Ireland, but the town has little to recommend it. Its principal proprietor, Mr. St. George, has lately built a handsome house in the Elizabethan

style of architecture, just outside the town. With much that is singular it combines still more of what is elegant and beautiful, and the pleasure-grounds that enclose it are laid out with great taste.

From this house we adjourned to the race-course, formed within a sort of natural amphitheatre, which, being surrounded on all sides by low rocky hills, disposed the spectators into very picturesque groups, and gave every one an opportunity of seeing the race. The day being very fine, there was an immense concourse of peasantry, who added greatly to the effect of the scene—an effect much increased by the costume of the females, which universally throughout this district is of a bright scarlet colour. The men were particularly fine, tall, strong, well-set fellows; but candour obliges me to confess, what gallantry would fain conceal, that here, as almost without exception among the lower orders of Ireland, the women were much inferior to their male companions, both in relative stature and in good looks.

The beauty of Irishwomen in the upper

ranks is so proverbial, that I can only account for this striking and general contrast in the inferior grades by their want of sufficient and proper food and their exposure to weather and very hard labour. For here, as in all half-civilized countries, the women seem to perform the greatest share of the work of the family, and that, too, of the most laborious kind, particularly in connection with those two great sources of an Irish cottier's comforts and subsistence, the peat bog and the potato garden.

There were plenty of booths on the course, and an abundance of whisky drunk ; nevertheless, all passed off very quietly, although every "boy" had in his hand a "stick" of no very peaceable dimensions, which, by his knowing method of handling it, he evidently could use with some effect, whenever his own honour, or the honour of his "faction," might require it.

The races consisted of two-mile heats, with three leaps in each heat, over solid stone walls, rather more than four feet high ; they were very well contested ; there was only one fall, and that of no consequence. These wall leaps

certainly make a country race much more interesting than the same is in England; and the coolness and ease with which both rider and horse take these formidable barriers in their gallop would astonish many a Saxon Nimrod. Between the heats there were also plenty of amateurs, who volunteered the leaps, backwards and forwards, for the amusement of themselves and others.

Another morning we rode over to Cong, to see its celebrated caves. The road to it presented no beauty, except what was derived from the gradually rising chain of the Cunnemarra Mountains, which, as seen from this side, form an extensive, very varied, and very picturesque chain: indeed, I know of few mountain-ranges in our islands of which the outline is more beautiful, or which, for their size, are more imposing.

Cong is a miserable, dirty little village, between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib, where we had great difficulty to procure stabling and provender for our steeds. The whole surrounding country, up to the quartzose and slate

rocks of Cunnemarra, is of that secondary limestone, which, all the world over, is so full of *cavernosities*.

The surplus waters of Lough Mask are discharged by subterranean channels, and do not fully appear to the light of day, until close to Cong, where they boil up in a vast basin of unknown depth, and immediately turn the wheels of a very large mill. There are, however, one or two spots between the two lakes, where this stream may be detected on its dark course, particularly at a place called the Pigeon Hole, about one mile from Cong. To this spot we accordingly directed our steps, under the guidance of a Cong cicerone; evoking on our way an aged sibyl from her smoky cabin, to provide us with straw and lights.

We found the Pigeon Hole to be a fissure, or chasm, on the side of a sloping hill, of trifling width, and about one hundred feet in depth. Down this we descended without any difficulty, and soon came to a cavern of smaller dimensions than I had anticipated. From under a low arch to our left rushed a tolerably

copious stream, which, after running about twenty or thirty yards across the cave, sinks beneath a similar arch, and is not afterwards seen until it re-appears in the basin I have mentioned, near to Cong. We traced its course as far as we could, by floating down bundles of lighted straw, which threw a murky and flickering glare over the dark walls of the low vault, quite in character with the scene ; while over-head the blue sky smiled down upon us, through the festoons of ivy and various shrubs, with which the mouth of the cavern is fringed.

This cave is the well known resort of "the White Trout" of Irish legend ; for whose veritable history I must refer my readers to Crofton Croker. It being a high holyday, great numbers of idle people had by this time swelled our retinue, and I therefore thought it a good opportunity to ascertain from some of the motley group whether such a fish does in reality exist here or not. But, though all had heard of the fish, this simple question I found it utterly impossible to decide, either

in the affirmative or the negative, upon the very spot where it is supposed to be seen.

Indeed, the great difficulty of obtaining any accurate information in Ireland, upon subjects of much greater importance than this, must have been experienced by every traveller. Where the Milesian has the slightest reason to imagine it may be for his interest to withhold the information sought, his ingenuity in warding off every inquiry is incomparable. But even where no such suspicion can possibly exist, and where the subject is completely within his observation and knowledge, it is too frequently next to impossible to gain precise and accurate information upon it, unless by a tedious process of cross-questioning and a comparison of the testimony of several informants. A ready, intelligent-sounding, and apparently satisfactory answer, you will most probably receive : but, if you depend upon it and act upon it, you will nine times out of ten find it erroneous. This I can only attribute to a general want of accuracy and clearness of perception in the Irish character. Indeed, poor

Pat seems not only *not* to possess the organ of accuracy, (by whatever name Dr. Spurzheim distinguishes it,) but to have no wish of acquiring it, no regard for it either in himself or others ; a disposition which, I fear, must tend equally to prevent an individual from succeeding in this work-a-day world, as well as a people from rising to the political importance and national greatness that they ought to enjoy.

But to return from this digression, which seems little connected with the Caves of Cong. The boys that accompanied us threw several stones under the arch from which the river issues ; and at last forced out a trout, about as big as a herring, which was of a rather light colour and curiously mottled ; but certainly not deserving the name of “ The White Trout :” nor displaying the ensanguined mark of the barbarous serjeant’s knife. *

* Crofton Croker, to whom I have before referred my reader, will inform him how a fair lady was changed into a white trout, which could not be tempted by any art of man ; until at length a serjeant bold, with cunning device, lured her from “ under the cool, translucent wave”—for when has

One attendant sibyl seemed to value her curiosities more highly than we did. After satisfying, or rather after paying, her, we walked to Ross Hill, a very lovely spot on Lough Mask, the joint property of Lords Leitrim and Charlemont, in right of their wives. The house is a very poor building ; but it is surrounded by a profusion of luxuriant timber, and most happily situated in a nook of Lough Mask, with two or three beautifully wooded islands in front of it, and immediately to the westward a grand range of mountains, broken by a succession of most picturesque gorges.

We saw this noble scene to peculiar advantage from the effect of several partial and distinct storms, which at times descended down

woman, since the days of Miss Bailey, been able to resist the artifices of the sons of Mars ? Having caught, the ruthless serjeant vowed he would *eat* her ! and accordingly stuck his knife in her silver side. The legend tells that she immediately resumed her original form, and, after frightening the soldier out of his wits, rushed to her favourite stream, where she again took her accustomed place, and may still be occasionally seen, distinguishable by the broad red spot on her side.

these rocky gorges, and threw their broad shadows across the brilliant sunshine in which the rest of the landscape glistened. This scene would have formed an invaluable study for a painter: but, even to an ignorant though enthusiastic lover of Nature, the contrast of light and shade on the mountains, the lake, the foliage; the rocks, *here* wreathed in a veil of mist, or *there* projecting their pointed summits through the mass of vapour into the blue sky above; the rain-drops falling to earth like molten silver; and the whole overarched and beautified by the broken segments of a most vivid rainbow: these, and a thousand other minor details of beauty, combined to produce a spectacle of uncommon loveliness which I shall not soon forget.

The scene was also rendered still more impressive by another circumstance, which to me had all the charm of novelty. It being St. John's Day, a great number of the neighbouring peasantry had attended mass in the adjoining chapel at Fair Hill; most of whom, upon coming out from their devotions, proceeded in a large body to

an ancient burial-ground, about half a mile from Ross Hill. A more picturesque spot could hardly have been chosen for the resting place of the dead, or the mournful meditations of the living; standing, as it does, in a very lone situation, embowered in lofty trees, on the very edge of the lake, and directly opposite to a low wooded islet. Each person, as he entered the holy precinct, literally "lifted up his voice and wept" for his own particular dead: and thus, for the first time in my life, what has been called "the Irish howl" on a sudden struck upon my ear, alternately swelling and falling as the feelings of the mourners gave it utterance.

I fear that upon this as upon subsequent occasions when I have heard this funeral cry, there was too much identity in the notes, too much measure in the cadences, to admit of believing it to be solely the genuine expression of intense grief. The effect, however, upon me was very great, heightened as it was by the circumstances under which I heard it, the novelty, the scenery, the associations

that naturally arise in one's mind on listening to the sounds which speak of lost friends and relations.

The word "howl" does not, in my opinion, describe the funeral cry of Ireland so well as "wail;" as the former expression gives me at least the idea of much shriller and more vehement exclamations of sorrow than what I have ever heard on these occasions. In fact, the scriptural expression I before quoted, "he lifted up his voice and wept," approaches much nearer to the sounds that were borne to my ears by the winds across the waters of Lough Mask than either "wail" or "howl." Very probably, however, the demonstration of grief may be much more acute, when the loss is more recent.

I will close my remarks on this subject by observing that there are few objects, which more forcibly strike a stranger in the interior of Ireland, than the ancient burial-places. These are often in the wildest and most secluded spots, remote from all habitations, or not unfrequently in the middle of cultivated

fields, without the least remains of any religious edifice adjoining, and equally without the slightest fence to protect the graves from the inroads of cattle, &c. : and yet, with that feudal attachment to the past, which in all things distinguishes the Irish, these simple cemeteries are still universally preferred by the Catholics to more modern places of sepulture.

After lingering long at Ross Hill, we returned to Cong ; and, while some bacon and eggs were preparing, were rash enough to allow ourselves to be conducted to two caves, very near the village. They are neither of them extensive, nor deep below the surface ; and it is merely a small lateral stream that flows through them : but in one are some tolerable stalactites. By this time, our “tail” of holiday idlers had become very numerous and very troublesome ; and a scene of extortion, and clamour, and annoyance ensued, which, I cannot help fearing, has prevented my according to the curiosities of Cong as much approbation as they intrinsically deserve. After swallowing what we could of the miserable viands set before us, we mounted

our horses, and were not sorry to escape from the filth, and beggary, and imposition of Cong.

On Sunday I attended divine service at the cathedral church of Tuam. It is small, and devoid of any external pretension, except a fine old Saxon arch at the entrance of the usual red sand-stone. But internally it is fitted up in a very neat, chaste manner; and it possesses a good organ. The Archbishop was present, a fine-looking old man; who, from his excellent character, his extensive charities, and zealous endeavours for the spiritual and temporal welfare of all around him, could not but be adored in any country but Ireland, where the poison of party enters even into religion.

We had a very long sermon of fifty-four minutes; as usual, extempore: and alas! also, as usual, very evangelical. The same clergyman likewise read the service, which is seldom the case in Ireland: and, in doing so, totally omitted the prayers for the Lord Lieutenant, for the Parliament, and for the Queen; and also would not call his Majesty "religious or gracious."

These omissions, I am sorry to say, I have often observed among the evangelical clergy of Ireland ; but, thus to mutilate the appointed liturgy of the Church, of which he was a public minister, in the presence of his diocesan, was, I thought, *un peu trop fort*.

As a most ardent, though most humble member of the Church of England, and sincerely convinced, not without much examination, that what are usually called the orthodox opinions, in opposition to Evangelical or Calvinistic tenets, are the real doctrines of that church, as well as the most consonant to Holy Scripture, it has given me great pain to remark, in those parts of Ireland where I have been, that a considerable majority of the most talented and most zealous young clergymen lean very perceptibly to Evangelicism, if not to Calvinism.

I cannot help thinking that this has contributed, with other circumstances, to retard the spread of Protestantism in that country. Instead of appearing under the benign features of general tolerance and universal charity, the

reformed religion assumes too often in Ireland the badge of party and the exclusiveness and sourness of Calvinism. The Irish Catholics do not hold more strictly the repudiated doctrine of “*Nulla salus extra Ecclesiam*,” than too many, I fear, of the most zealous Protestant ministers, who doubt the possibility of a Roman Catholic being saved—“according to the Bible, at least,” as they generally qualify it.

Very many of the younger clergymen are learned, talented, and most energetic in the discharge of their ministerial duties : but it is to be lamented that their zeal does not always recommend itself by the softer and more amiable graces of the Christian character.

And then as to their public preaching. It is the boast of the Protestant, in distinction to the Catholic, that he possesses and appeals to the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. Whereas the public preaching of that class of the Irish clergy to whom I refer, instead of inculcating the *whole* doctrines and duties of Christ’s religion, and conveying the *general* tenor of God’s Word, seems to me to

dwell far too exclusively upon isolated passages of St. Paul and the Prophets, which, in my humble judgment, they misconceive, and attempt to expound in the conventional phraseology of that school, which fills the ear, but speaks intelligibly neither to the reason nor the heart.

This defect, I conceive, is still further increased by the prevailing custom of preaching extempore. I have heard many extempore discourses, and have been much struck by the effect of particular passages : but I never yet heard one such, that I did not regret the preacher had not committed it to paper. With scarcely a single exception that I can remember, the reasoning is more or less defective, and the subject imperfectly handled. If the same words are not repeated, the same thoughts recur again and again, until their first effect is frittered away, and the original line of argument is lost ; the meaning often very indistinctly conveyed : and doctrinal and practical assertions are hazarded, which mature reflection would have shown to be erroneous and

mischievous. And can these serious objections be at all compensated by any occasional brilliancy of effect, or oratorical display, in the eyes of men, who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness—who are seeking for accurate instruction and full information upon the most momentous of all subjects ?

Under these disadvantages, and without at all alluding to the many others that beset Protestantism in Ireland, is it wonderful that, with all the acknowledged and palpable errors of Popery, conversions should, alas ! be so few and far between, among such a people as the Irish ?

It may seem presumptuous in me to express this judgment of no inconsiderable a portion of the younger Protestant clergy in Ireland ; but it is impossible to be long in that country without entertaining a strong feeling and opinion on this important subject, which I have therefore felt myself called upon to declare : but which I offer with the sincerest consciousness of my own unworthiness to judge another.

Neither do I deny that much of the sectarian spirit, which strikes an Englishman as

observable in the more serious Irish Protestants, may in a great measure be attributed to the peculiar position of the reformed religion with regard to the Catholic faith in this land. I have only ventured to remark on its existence, and lament its unfortunate effect, without shutting my eyes to the many exciting causes which account for and partly palliate it.

After service we adjourned to take luncheon at the Archbishop's Palace, a large and comfortable house. The grounds and gardens have been greatly improved by the present Prelate, and are very pretty. I also went on this and other occasions to examine the new Roman Catholic chapel, which has lately been erected on a scale of magnificence unusual in the provinces. Many Protestants have subscribed to it; and their arms are duly emblazoned on the eastern window. In the centre are the arms of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Tuam, with all their episcopal honours. In fact never was any legislative enactment more immediately and entirely disregarded than that famous provision of the Catholic Relief Bill, which was

to have been the sufficient safeguard of Protestantism, after the removal of all others. The Roman Catholic Prelates openly assume the titles of their respective sees, and are universally designated and addressed as such, without any one dreaming of enforcing the penalty, which *I think* I remember an Act of Parliament imposes for so doing.

The chapel at Tuam is handsomely designed, and for the most part well executed : although some of the stonework, both of the interior and exterior, appeared to me faulty. I am not at all sorry to see these elegant structures rising in so many parts of Ireland : both because it is a proof that the most bigoted members of the Catholic Church have no expectation, for the present at least, of *resuming* the religious buildings now in the hands of the Protestants ; and also because I fervently trust that, when the great mass of the people become more enlightened and better informed on religious subjects, these same edifices will hereafter witness a form of worship more agreeable to the doctrines and spirit of Christianity.

It is a common outcry in England, that the Irish suffer from want of education: and doubtless there is but too much truth in the complaint. And yet the Englishman will be much struck in traversing the wilder parts of Ireland, to observe more outward and visible signs of education than he has been accustomed to see in the remoter districts of his own country.

In country parishes of England, the parochial school is generally merged among other buildings, and is often of a very unpretending character. But in Ireland the school-house is not hid under a bushel. On the contrary, if you observe a very neat and frequently very ornamental structure, placed in a very conspicuous position, you may be sure that it is a school: and, to their credit be it said, there are few large proprietors, in those provinces that I have visited, who have not one or more places for the gratuitous instruction of their tenantry upon their estates.

The unfortunate difference of religion between the tenants and their landlords often leads to much bickering upon this subject of

education : and, where a strong spirit of proselytism is evinced, the priests often prevent the children from attending the Protestant, landlord's school. The feeling of the age is, however, so decidedly in favour of education, that they are in general ashamed of openly opposing it, however much they may feel it to be probably adverse to the interests of their church.

Much information, especially upon religious subjects, is therefore necessarily creeping in amongst the youthful population of Ireland, together with the means of acquiring infinitely more. The rising generation will be incomparably better educated than their forefathers : and such of us as live for another twenty or thirty years will thus have an opportunity of judging what fruits the tree of knowledge will bear in that country. May they prove such as its best friends could wish !

A very excellent school has long been established upon the property of my host, which often afforded me a most interesting visit. It is solely for girls ; of whom there were above

sixty, all Catholics, except two daughters of policemen. While observing and admiring their cleanly appearance, their orderly behaviour, and apparent sense of the advantages they enjoyed, I could not but form the hope that these habits of order, cleanliness, and industry, must cling to them, more or less, in after life, when they become wives and mothers. And although, in this instance, the instruction is conducted upon the most tolerant principles by a Catholic school-mistress, as well as with the approbation and occasional inspection of the Catholic diocesan and the parish priest, I yet confidently trust that the acquaintance thus acquired with the Book upon which all religion is founded, and the unavoidable comparison they must draw between the Churches of Rome and of England, will produce its natural effect in many instances; and that the bread of life, thus cast upon the waters, will be found after many days.

CHAPTER VII.

Castlebar — Lough Con — Ballina — Sligo — Lough Gilly —
Hazlewood — Ballyshannon — Lough and River Erne —
Salmon-fishing.

FINDING that my young host, who was to be my companion through Cunnemarra, would not be able to leave home for a few days, I determined on employing the intervening time in a short tour up the coast, as far as Ballyshannon : and accordingly, on Friday, June 28, bade my kind friends a temporary adieu. At Tuam I took the Galway mail, which conveyed me both rapidly and well, through an uninteresting country, to Castlebar. This is the capital of Mayo, and appeared a more considerable and better town than I had been led to expect. The *square* in which the church is situated, though not of geometrical symmetry, is pretty ; and there are some very tolerable shops : but the inns are bad.

Having swallowed an early dinner, I proceeded to Ballina, a stage of sixteen Irish miles, in an open car, during a most deceitful gleam of sunshine. Instead of the old circuitous road by Foxford, a new line has lately been opened, which crosses a narrow part of Lough Conn, at a place called the Pontoons. The first few miles traverse a wild, flat moorland, stretched along the base of Mount Nephim, who had collected round his huge, cloud-capped head a dense mass of fog and mist, which he every now and then squeezed down upon us in most undeniable showers, just allowing us sufficient time to dry ourselves before he re-commenced the process.

We soon came in sight of Lough Conn, parallel to whose shores we passed for a couple of hours. The scenery of this lake possesses a wild grandeur, for which I was scarcely prepared. Steep and savage rocks for the most part hem in its broad waters, interspersed occasionally with extensive plantations: while above all towers the vast dark bulk of Nephim, the giant of the Mayo mountains. I should

guess Lough Conn to be about ten miles in length ; at each end it expands to a very wide sheet of water, but is so contracted in the middle as to admit of a bridge and causeway being thrown across. At this spot stands a lone and poor cabin, which offers some scanty "entertainment for man and horse;" and, while our beast was eating his oats, I entered into conversation with its occupant, who gave me such accounts of the number of salmon and large trout in the lake as to make me resolve to give it a day's trial on my return. The river Moy, which issues from it, supplies it with these fish, whenever there is a sufficient flood to enable them to pass the weirs at Ballina, or when these cruives are taken up in the fence months. Lough Conn also contains gillaroo trout, though not in any great abundance.

On this occasion I merely slept at Ballina, and the next morning went on by the mail to Sligo. For the first two or three miles we enjoyed rather fine views of the banks of the Moy, down to its embouchure at Killala : but afterwards the road possessed little interest,

passing over a sort of table-land of open, flat bog, with a range of moderate hills to the eastward.

About ten miles from Ballina, we changed horses at the house of a man named Lurgan, who, about two years since, assisted by his heroic wife, made so gallant a defence against a midnight party of villains, killing and wounding several of them. I naturally examined the countenances of this courageous couple with some curiosity; they both appeared to me expressive of great determination. Lurgan never stirs outside his doors without arms, and has ever since the attack had two policemen stationed in the house for his protection.

Gradually, as we approached Sligo, the country became much more picturesque, and displayed a succession of interesting home and distant views, which I regret that my descriptive powers cannot transfer to these pages. About four miles before reaching that city, we had to wait a few minutes for another mail, at a place called Ballyseñere, which gave me an opportunity of inspecting its very curious position. It is built along the steep banks of a

considerable stream, which tumbles over a long ledge of slate rock, in a series of romantic falls, the last of which, in particular, is of tolerable height and great beauty.

At Sligo I went to Boyle's Hotel, with which I had every reason to be satisfied ; although I afterwards heard that the adjoining inn, kept by Mrs. Ross, is at least as comfortable and cleanly. The whole of the afternoon I employed in lionizing the town and its immediate environs : but, like a schoolboy eating his cake, I reserved the great boast of Sligo, Hazelwood, until the last.

The situation of this city greatly excited my admiration. It is surounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, formed by several ranges of diversified shapes and grand outline, well grouped together. But the town is unworthy of the site, being ill built and dirty. How often must one in Ireland make an exception to this general condemnation, that there is a handsome new gaol !—and *here* I may also add that there is a very neat new church, and a spacious infirmary, or fever-hospital, I forget which.

A considerable river passes through the town, the drainage of Lough Gilly; and at its mouth is a small port, which seems to require and to deserve great improvements. There were but three or four vessels moored alongside its quay, all of which were Scotch. Few cities suffered so dreadfully from the cholera as this: and it appears scarcely to have recovered from the effects of that terrible visitation.

I attended divine service the next morning at the Old Church, the interior of which is commodious and rather handsome: but the congregation was bad, as was also the weather, and the service indifferently performed. Shortly afterwards I set out on foot to explore the far-famed beauties of Hazelwood, a place belonging to Mr. Wynn, and justly considered one of the very loveliest spots in Ireland. It is on the shores of Lough Gilly, and about two miles to the eastward of Sligo.

After traversing a long and magnificent avenue, I entered the grounds by a kind of park farm, where I observed some remarkably fine sheep and cattle: and soon came to a very

pretty gardener's cottage, from which point the beauties of the demesne rapidly developed themselves. The house is a substantial, spacious, and even handsome mansion; though hardly corresponding to the surpassing loveliness of the situation, or in character with its scenery. Passing by it, I came to the boat-house, where I had been told I should find the wood-ranger, the usual cicerone of the place; but the inauspicious state of the weather having, I suppose, led him to expect no strangers that day, he was not to be seen. After waiting some time, and admiring the extensive collection of elegant boats of every description, I determined on exploring the grounds by myself, and for two or three hours perambulated them in all directions. The morning, as I said, was showery, therefore very unfavourable for the advantageous display of scenery; yet I have very seldom seen a place that gave me such entire and extreme satisfaction.

The grounds of Hazelwood are laid out upon an irregularly shaped peninsula, jutting out

into Lough Gilly. The outline of the shore is much indented, and the surface of the land undulating. Every advantage has been taken of these circumstances by the proprietor : and the whole is kept with the greatest care, as it has been planned with the greatest taste.

This little promontory is clothed with the most magnificent wood of every sort ; including splendid ash ; oaks of various kinds, many of them very old and large ; most noble laurels, and extraordinarily lofty Portugal laurels, at this time in full flower. These, and a thousand other trees, afford examples of woodland scenery that a Ruysdael might study ; at one time opening into secluded and stately glades, at another overarching with their impenetrable shade walks fittest for meditation ; or again through most judicious vacancies discovering delightful views of the blue lake beyond.

Lough Gilly is about six miles in length, and in some parts is from three to four miles in breadth. The whole of its southern shore is environed by a lofty range of most picturesque mountains, whose base is adorned by a

profusion of natural wood, that creeps a long way up their sides ; while, far and near, over the surface of the water, are scattered numerous islands waving with dark foliage. Unfavourable as was the weather, I was quite enchanted with this scene of loveliness ; which is the first I have seen in Ireland that has given me an idea of what Killarney may be.

If I had not been pressed for time, I would certainly have spent at least one day upon the lake, and examined its charms from every point of view. Had I done so, I believe that I might also have enjoyed tolerable angling for both trout and salmon towards the upper end. Being, however, unable to spare the requisite time, I left Sligo the next morning by the mail to Ballyshannon, a distance of twenty Irish miles. The road passed for the greater part of the way between the sea-coast and a continued chain of mountains, of which it presented highly interesting prospects.

I have before remarked upon the extreme variety and grandeur of the mountain ranges round Sligo ; but I think that of Benbulbin,

under which we this morning travelled, one of the most peculiar and striking. As seen from the road, it had the appearance of an elevated table-land, perfectly level on the top, with its sides descending steeply into the plain we were crossing; and, at their further termination before us, sweeping down in a bold and majestic curve, with an edge apparently like a razor. The upper cliffs were perfectly perpendicular; and beneath them the accumulated debris of ages had formed a precipitous slope, covered with the most refreshing verdure, except where scored by the gullies, which a thousand mountain storms had worn in the soft soil. The only parallel that I remember to this scenery, is in the hills that form the western shore of Loch Lochy, on the Caledonian canal.

Along the foot of this picturesque chain, I observed with great pleasure a number of very comfortable farm-houses, all built on the same plan by Sir R. G. Booth, whose mansion is seen at a considerable distance to the left, on the sea-shore. Further on, the hills receded from

the road; and the bay of Donegal unfolded before us its extensive and beautiful waters, backed by the Killybeg Mountains.

We passed through two or three neat villages, which are yearly becoming more and more frequented by bathers; and about ten o'clock reached Ballyshannon: where, having established myself in tolerable quarters at Miss Boyle's, I immediately dispatched a polite missive to Dr. Sheil, the lessee of the fishery, for permission to angle, which the kind old gentleman most readily granted.

Here is a copy of his printed permission:—

Permit the Bearer, —————

to ANGLE in the River ERNE, or any River flowing into LOUGH-ERNE, in the counties of DONEGAL, FERMANAGH, CAVAN, LE TRIM, or TYRONE, until the 12th Day of AUGUST next.

Dated this 1st Day of July, 1833.

*To all Water-keepers
and others whom it
may concern.*

T. SHEIL.

EVERY GENTLEMAN permitted to Angle is at liberty to take to his own use TWO SALMON during the season: all others taken and brought to shore are (if possible) to be saved and again let loose into the water, in the most careful manner; but, in case he may not be able to save the life of the fish, it is to be sent to the Fish-House; or weighed and paid for to the Clerk.—No Gentleman is permitted to ANGLE in the stream running from the SALMON-BOXES.

Such was Dr. Sheil's gracious permission, of which I was most eager immediately to avail myself; as I knew that I was on the banks of perhaps the best river in Ireland for rod-fishing; and had every reason to anticipate great sport, in consequence of the late rains. As soon, therefore, as I could secure the services of a water-keeper, whom the Doctor had recommended to me, I sallied forth.

My attendant's name was Paddy Musgrave, usually here pronounced Mushland! and a very useful, honest, good-humoured fellow he proved to be. He knows the river thoroughly, and can cast a line like an artist, but has no idea of tying flies. Indeed, to my surprise, I learned there was no good fly-maker in this town, so famous for its angling: a circumstance, however, I had personally no cause to regret, as I was soon convinced I could have none better than those I had bought at Limerick.

I began about twelve o'clock, and fished two or three miles up the river very carefully. The wind was extremely cold for the season, and from a bad quarter: but the water was in such

excellent order, and known to be so full of fish, that I momentarily expected to hook one of those monsters of the deep of which Paddy kept talking to me. None such, however, did I see : I only moved three salmon, all of which obstinately refused the fly.

I was severely disappointed : but, seeing it useless to persevere, returned home ; and, while dinner was preparing, strolled down to the salmon-leap, immediately below the town, where the river tumbles over a lofty ledge of rocks into the sea. Close above this fall are placed the salmon-boxes : but, as they do not by any means occupy the whole breadth of the stream, plenty of fish can at any time run up into the river, whenever there is sufficient water. This I believe to be a much better plan than the exterminating system, adopted on some rivers, of never allowing a single fish to pass the weirs, except in close time : and which, in a few years, must materially injure, if it does not destroy, the smaller streams in particular.

I stood for some time watching the salmon

attempt the leap : many accomplished it successfully at the first spring ; but more were foiled again and again. It was an interesting sight : and the whole scenery around me was very picturesque.

The fall itself is a fine object, when the river is sufficiently swelled by recent rains ; pouring its whitened and foaming flood into a spacious, black pool, the rendezvous of innumerable salmon before taking the leap. The rocks rise dark and steep from the water's edge, and seem, as it were, to support the hanging cliffs, on which the town is singularly built. The tide reaches the foot of the fall ; while far to the westward is seen the open Bay of Donegal.

The pool below the leap is daily netted at certain times of the tide ; and I fortunately arrived just as they were preparing to draw it. It is a difficult place to net ; but they landed fifty or sixty very fine salmon, although they did not catch a tithe of the fish that were in it.

Dr. Sheil was also there, to witness the capture, with one of his daughters, in an open

carriage. I accordingly went up, and thanked him for his politeness in giving me permission to angle; when he expressed great surprise that I had had no sport. He is particularly gentlemanlike in his manners; but, having lately had a paralytic seizure, is sometimes difficult to understand. I believe that he leases the fishery from Colonel Conolly: and contracts with Mr. Little, of Coleraine, to send him all the fish at so much per pound; usually about five-pence. It is in most seasons an extremely profitable concern.

My bad success, the day before, had made me somewhat undervalue the much vaunted merits of the Erne for salmon-fishing: and, the next morning appearing too bright and cold to promise much sport, I resolved to take a drive for eight or ten miles along the Enniskillen road, in order to obtain a complete view of the lower part of Lough Erne. This is the largest lake in Ireland. It may, indeed, be said to be divided into two lakes at Enniskillen; both possessing great beauty, though of different characters.

I drove to a point near Churchill, which commands nearly the whole of the lower lake. This noble sheet of water is here very extensive, being ten or twelve miles in breadth: and its shores are diversified by winding bays, and wooded promontories, embellished with numerous seats, castles, and villages; behind which rise, to the north, verdant and rounded hills, and to the south loftier and bolder crags.

I fear I should not have dwelt so long as I did on this lovely landscape, if I had at all anticipated the sport that awaited me. At the lower end of Lough Erne is situated the small village of Belleck, just where the superfluous waters of the lake rush over two or three grand ledges of rock, and thence commence their short course of about four miles to the sea, at Ballyshannon. The stream is hemmed in, almost the whole way, by lofty rocks; and forms a succession of rapids, most favourable to the fisherman.

Immediately above the fall of Belleck is a considerable pool; and, knowing how prone salmon are to rest for some time, after winning

their way up any very strong stream, I determined to make my first essay there, and thence to proceed down the river.

To fish this pool, a boat was necessary ; which while they were preparing, I carelessly threw in my line, to wet it. My fly, however, had hardly touched the water, when, to my astonishment, up rushed a very large salmon to take it. Fortunately, I did not touch him. Therefore, after giving him three or four minutes' rest, I again cast over the place, with all the skill that I could command ; and at the second throw had the gratification of hooking him. He proved a very strong and active fish, who gave me three-quarters of an hour's very hard work, before I could completely master and gaff him ; which at length I did, to the infinite satisfaction of myself, and about forty or fifty spectators, who by this time had collected around me. The fish weighed exactly seventeen pounds, the largest salmon I had ever yet killed ; and had evidently run up from the sea with the last flood.

I was greatly elated with my sport ; and lost

no time in preparing to try what they assured me was a much better part of the pool.

I think it was about the sixth cast, when a huge monster made a spring, on his side, at my fly, almost close to the boat ; and, in a second afterwards, to my infinite joy I felt that I had him fairly and firmly hooked. The moment he tasted the steel, his rush was tremendous ! I instantly gave him the butt, and suffered him to run out the line, which he did with inconceivable velocity, until I had not more than five or ten yards left on the wheel. I then succeeded in turning him. He tried the same manœuvre again and again, until I was quite tired of alternately letting out and wheeling up the line :

“ Impatient of the wound,

He rolls and wreathes his shining body round ;

Then headlong shoots beneath the dashing tide,

The trembling fins the boiling wave divide.

Now hope exalts the fisher's beating heart,

Now he turns pale, and fears his dubious art.”—

It would be quite impossible to convey to the uninitiated any just idea of the palpitating suspense which takes possession of the young

angler's soul while playing so large a fish, especially during the first and the last moments of the struggle.

“ He views the tumbling fish with longing eyes ;” and in imagination sees him already gasping on the verdant bank, but trembles lest a faithless strand in his tackle, a weed, a rock, or an expiring effort of his mighty antagonist, may defraud him of his prize, almost within his reach ! These are moments that try a man's nerves : but no really nervous man has any business to attempt salmon-fishing ; he would be ill for a month after killing such a fish as I had hold of this day !

The place, however, being roomy and clear, and my tackle strong, I had little fear for the result. My captive played much more actively than the heavier salmon usually do ; but, like all large fish, never showed himself after the first rush, until quite exhausted ; when he began to roll upon the surface of the water, and, at each glimpse that he gave us of his length and depth, raised higher and higher our estimation of his size. He struggled long and

hard for life and liberty : but at length, after a full hour's severe play, I brought him to the gaff, amid the shouts and screams of my delighted spectators :

“Till floating broad upon his breathless side,
And to his fate abandoned, to the shore
I gaily dragged my unresisting prize.”

When raised out of the water, he proved to be larger even than the most sanguine had calculated. He was very thick and deep ; of a silvery whiteness, and so fresh from ocean, that the *lernaea salmonca* yet adhered to his scales. I had him immediately taken to an adjoining miller's and weighed : when, to my great satisfaction, he was found to exceed twenty-seven pounds and a half. This is probably the largest fish I shall ever have to record, as these leviathans seldom take the fly : insomuch that I was assured it is five years since so heavy a salmon had been killed with the rod at Ballyshannon. I afterwards, in the same pool, rose a salmon of seven or eight pounds, and hooked a fourth of about twelve pounds ; but these very soon escaped.

Having had such glorious success in this spot, I walked down the river, and tried two or three other famous pools. The day was, however, become so bright and calm, that at each place I was obliged to wait for wind and cloud ; a salmon seldom taking the fly while the sun is bright, unless the wind be very high. I however fairly rose five more salmon, not one of which was under twelve pounds in weight. I killed one of above fourteen pounds, which showed me great sport : and I played another of at least eighteen or twenty pounds for more than half an hour, until he was so completely exhausted that Paddy was just going to gaff him, when, in one of his death-struggles, he ran the line under a stone I could not avoid, and very soon broke it. Thus concluded the most splendid day's fishing I ever have had, or perhaps ever shall have : and I must confess, it was with no small feeling of disappointment that I reflected I was bound in honour to leave a place where I could command such magnificent sport, in consequence of an appointment to meet my friend, the next day but one, at Ballina.

I was at any rate determined to enjoy a few hours' angling before quitting Ballyshannon, and accordingly drove over very early the next morning to my favourite pool above Belleck. Nor did it altogether deceive my expectations. I rose three salmon ; one of which only, a fresh fish of twelve pounds, I killed, after some excellent sport.

I then tried the pool immediately below the first fall : in order to do which I was obliged to wade along the rocky ledge, over which the torrent tumbled—a somewhat perilous feat.

From this insecure station I had cast over a considerable part of the pool without success, when, as I was carefully stepping from one rock to another, with my rod over my shoulder, and the fly playing in the stream, I felt a violent pull at the end of the line, and instantly found that I had unwittingly hooked an immense salmon.

This occurred exactly opposite to the barracks, where a small detachment of soldiers had just been dismissed from morning parade. There were also several policemen on the banks,

besides a number of idlers, who, having witnessed my sport of the previous day, were on the look out for similar amusement. I therefore determined to play the salmon in a way to show my brilliant circle of spectators as much diversion as possible. Accordingly I bore upon him as hard as I thought my tackle would allow. He was a powerful fish, of little less than twenty pounds : and being thus taught to feel the pain of the hook, and the thralldom of the line, before his strength was at all exhausted, or his love of liberty tamed by fatigue, he made the most vigorous efforts to escape, springing out of the water, throwing himself along its surface on his side, and darting with the utmost rapidity into every nook of the pool, until he made its waters boil :

“ Then seeks the furthest ooze, the sheltering weed,
The caverned bank, his old secure abode :
And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool.
Indignant of the guile.”

Meanwhile the exclamations of delight and astonishment that burst from all sides were as exciting as they were amusing.

At length, in one of his rushes across the pool, he almost threw himself upon the opposite ledge of rock, near which the soldiers were standing. Under the excitement of the moment they ran down to the spot, in their red jackets and white trowsers, which so completely scared the fish, that he turned with lightning's speed towards me ; and, before I could wheel up my line sufficiently to command him, went to the bottom, and entrenched himself beneath a sunken rock. Here he got the line inextricably entangled : and, after an hour's vain attempts to dislodge him, he broke the tackle and escaped ; not, however, before he had afforded nearly a hundred individuals an infinity of amusement.

I afterwards rose four or five salmon, lower down the river, and caught two, of seven or eight pounds each ; which, according to Dr. Sheil's desire, I restored unscathed, though not perhaps *unscared*, to their native element.

And thus ended my first acquaintance with the Erne, which, for the number of large fish,

is quite unequalled in my experience. In any tolerable weather it must always afford fair sport : but I believe that I saw it under peculiarly favourable circumstances, having fortunately arrived just as the water was clearing after a heavy flood, which had brought up more large fish than had been known in the river for some years.

The fly that I found the most successful here, as almost every where else that I have tried it, was one of O'Shaughnessy's, a deep orange, silk body, with broad gold tinsel, rich mixed wings, and macaw horns.

In consequence of the state of the water, I was able to use treble gut : but in nearly every other river or lake, that I fished throughout the summer, the salmon would not look at a fly, unless on single gut. If, however, it be strong, and not too much worn at the head of the fly, a salmon of any weight may be killed by a good angler, with single gut, in a tolerably clear river. But then this victory must be achieved, like so many others, not by headlong opposition, but by patience and skill. The

angler conquers by yielding ; as he is warned by one whose descriptions show that he could wield the rod as well as the pen :

“ While the line stretches with th’ unwieldy prize,
Each motion humour with thy steady hands,
And one slight hair the mighty bulk commands :
Till, tired at last, despoiled of all his strength,
The game athwart the stream unfolds his length.”

GAY’S RURAL SPORTS.

If my time had been more at my own disposal, I could have employed a week most agreeably in several excursions through this neighbourhood ; to which I allude for the sake of any future tourist, who may come here with the same tastes, but with more leisure than I had. I should have been delighted not only to give the river Erne a few day’s more trial, but would also most certainly have made an expedition by water as far as Enniskillen ; when, I believe, I might have satisfactorily combined the two great objects of my tour, good fishing, and fine scenery. I should also have liked to pay at least one visit to Lough Melvin, which contains great numbers of white and brown trout, as well as a tolerable supply of the gil-

laroo, a fish that I was most anxious to catch and examine.

Having, however, promised to meet my friend the next day at Ballina, I did not choose to disappoint him: and accordingly, after an early dinner, drove to Sligo, where I slept; and the next morning took the mail to Ballina, by the same route I had previously traversed. We fixed our quarters at Atkinson's Hotel, where we met with extremely comfortable accommodation and great civility.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ballina — Fishing in the River Moy — Westport — Croagh Patrick — Delphi — Angling in the Lakes — General Description of Cunnemarra — Joyce's Country — The Great Killery — Arrival at Renvyle.

BALLINA is a town of moderate size, built principally on the western side of the river Moy ; the church, and one or two neat adjoining residences, appearing to great advantage on the opposite bank. The town exhibits sundry marks of improvement ; and the environs are pleasing. There are many new and well-built houses ; a new court-house, &c. : and a new bridge is in contemplation. A very handsome Roman Catholic chapel has also just been completed in the same style, though, of course, not on the same scale as that of Tuam : and about a mile and a half down the river

are the well-timbered grounds belonging to Colonel Knox Gore, who is erecting there a splendid mansion in the gothic style.

About a hundred yards above the old bridge, which at present unites the two parts of the town, is a ledge of rock, where are situated the weirs, or salmon-boxes. They entirely occupy the whole breadth of the stream, with the exception of a narrow gap to let the spent fish go down: few salmon, therefore, can pass above them, (unless in very high floods,) until their removal in close time.

The rod-fishing extends from these weirs, for about a mile down the river; but, as the tide reaches quite up to them, there are three hours every day when all chance of sport is suspended by the entrance of the salt water, in which, I believe, salmon will rarely, if ever, take the fly, although white trout frequently will. In this reach of the river there are a few streams; but by far the greater part is still and deep: so that a breeze is almost as much required here as on a lake. And, again, although much of the water can be commanded

from the bank, a great deal of it cannot be reached by the best caster ; a boat, therefore, has considerably the advantage.

Few rivers perhaps contain greater number of salmon than the Moy ; but they do not in general run large : and at this season are usually from four to seven pounds in weight.

The fishery is rented from several proprietors by Mr. Little, who holds so many fisheries in the north-west of Ireland : but the resident manager is Mr. Crawford, who lodges at Atkinson's, and who will always grant liberty to any gentleman to angle. Vast quantities are taken during the summer in the weirs : but, besides these, still more are caught by nets at a place a mile lower down. The number occasionally taken here in a single haul would seem incredible : the only two hauls, however, that I saw were very unsuccessful. I was assured by one of the principal managers that, either last year or the year before, above seventy thousand salmon were caught at Bal-lina during the season.

Immediately above the place of netting is the ice-house ; and five or six smacks are constantly employed, as long as the fishing lasts, in conveying the salmon to Glasgow, Liverpool, &c. Notwithstanding the numbers taken, however, this fishery does not seem to answer, as I understand its owners have got into considerable difficulties, legal and pecuniary : and the fishery itself is consequently in great confusion and disorder. It does not at present net one half of what it ought, and is pillaged in every possible way : at least such was the universal belief and report at Ballina.

If numbers be his object, I know not where the angler can have a better chance than on the Moy : but he must not expect to kill the leviathans of Ballyshannon. I must also confess that, to my taste, the style of fishing here is tame ; inasmuch as you are confined to a boat, which is poled along, and anchored in different points. The space for angling is also circumscribed ; besides which there are usually ten or twelve other boats on the water, and perhaps from twenty to thirty men and boys

fishing from the bank and wading. Nevertheless, such is the abundance of fish in the river, that, at this season, there are enough for all; and for two or three days I liked it very well, as we had always a sufficiency of rises to keep us on the alert; and were, moreover, much amused in watching and chatting with the tribe of anglers around us.

The day of our arrival, the tide did not answer for angling that afternoon; and we therefore contented ourselves with making every arrangement for a serious attack on the genus *salmo*, the next morning, with a young fisherman of the name of John Ruhane. It is only lately that he has taken up the profession; but he is naturally intelligent, dresses a fly well, and does not cast a line badly. He is withal good-tempered, civil, and well-conducted: so that we had every reason to be satisfied with him during our short acquaintance.

This first morning we were out on the water betimes, but could hardly stir a fish for three or four hours: and only an occasional salmon was hooked at long intervals by any of our

numerous rivals. Afterwards, either the day improved, or I hit upon flies that better suited their taste; and I succeeded in killing four salmon before the tide came up, and compelled us to leave the river. The largest of these weighed barely six pounds; and the total weight of the whole was only eighteen pounds. It was, however, a pretty sight, at times, on looking down the river on a beautiful afternoon, to see perhaps half-a-dozen fishermen playing each a salmon at the same moment; especially (if I may say so without a bull) when one of these was yourself.

The second morning we got up at five o'clock, in order to have a couple of hours' fishing before high water. We caught four salmon of the usual weight before breakfast; and in the afternoon killed five more: besides wilfully losing three or four others, by trying experiments about getting them into the boat without either the gaff or landing-net. On one occasion, while I was clearing our lines, which had got entangled, a salmon took the fly that was dangling in the water close to my

hand ; upon which I gave the line a gentle twitch to hook him, and, instantly seizing my rod, played the fish and killed him, as much to our astonishment as satisfaction.

I fished, as every one else does at Ballina, with two small flies, tied on single gut. Those that we found to answer best had orange or violet bodies, mixed wings, with either grouse, or jay, or Gallina tackle, whipped under them ; the latter either plain or stained yellow : but I do not feel at all sure that better and more killing flies might not be devised.

The third morning we were again on the water about five o'clock, in the hope of enjoying some excellent sport : but, alas ! "there was not a breath the blue wave to curl." Soon afterwards the sun came forth in unclouded majesty : wherefore, seeing it fruitless to expect any fishing, we gave up all idea of remaining longer at Ballina ; and immediately after breakfast proceeded to Westport, on our way into Cunnemarra. While our horse was baiting at the half-way house on Lough Conn, went on the lake for half an hour ; but, its

surface being like glass, we could, of course, expect no sport, nor form any ideas of its capabilities.

At Castlebar I laid in a stock of tea for myself, and of tobacco for my future attendants : and let me recommend my brother anglers never to be without the latter article at least ; for, in the wilder districts, into which their amusement will often lead them, they will not unfrequently find it much more valuable, and more acceptable, than money.

Having dined at Castlebar, we took a car to Westport, a short stage of eight or nine Irish miles. The country improved much in beauty, as we approached that little seaport : and, in particular, the celebrated view obtained on descending the last hill struck us with great admiration. Lord Sligo's extensive and wooded demesne is seen encircling the town ; beyond which opens Clew Bay, with Clare Island very picturesquely closing its mouth, not unlike Capri, as seen from Naples ; while, to the left, towers above all the proud cone of Croagh Patrick.

Upon entering Westport, it gave me great pleasure to observe what great attention had been paid to its ornamental appearance, by its spirited proprietor, the Marquis of Sligo. A considerable stream, confined within well kept banks, and overshadowed by trees, flows through the centre, and thence into the grounds of the adjoining park. Very many of the houses are neat, and even handsome: and the hotel is one of the best built and best conducted inns that I have met with in the provinces of Ireland.

Lord Sligo had, unfortunately for us, been suddenly summoned to London only a few days before our arrival. We were consequently obliged to content ourselves with inspecting the outside of his house, which I cannot say that I altogether admired, although planned by one of our first architects. I was much more pleased with the demesne that surrounds it. The surface of this fine park is varied and undulating, and thickly planted with noble trees, which afford a thousand delicious sylvan scenes, all of them crowned by St. Patrick's storied "Reek," which seems almost to overhang the

town. The stream I before mentioned has been dammed up, so as to form several cascades, and immediately below the house expands into a very considerable artificial lake.

Adjoining it is the small harbour of Westport, in which we were sorry to find very little shipping. Indeed, its entrance is so very intricate, from the number of low islands and shoals in Clew Bay, that I should fear it can never be a place of much trade. From the information I received, I have little doubt that Black Sod Bay and Ballmullett will eventually monopolize the commerce of this district.

Whilst at the port, Croagh Patrick looked so invitingly clear, that we were tempted to proceed at once on foot to its ascent, without returning to Westport for a car, as we had originally intended. From the town to the foot of the mountain is about four and a half miles of good road: and from this point to the summit is perhaps two miles more. The latter part is so steep and difficult, that he must be a good mountaineer who accomplishes

it in less than an hour : it took us just an hour and a quarter of fair, steady walking, although neither of us were despicable pedestrians. On the road we picked up a professional guide named Garvey, who seemed to possess very few qualifications for his avocation.

Croagh Patrick, or the Reek, is said to be 2,666 feet above the level of the sea.* It is, I believe, of the same quartzose formation as the Sugarloaf, near Bray ; and exhibits the same conical shape. There being no other rival heights near it, except to the south, the prospects it commands in every other direction are very extensive, and equally remarkable for great variety and beauty. The bold and lofty coast of Mayo and Galway is distinctly seen from near Ballmullett to the hill of Renvyle : beyond this rocky and broken barrier stretches a boundless expanse of the Atlantic, studded with islands, among which Queen Granawaile's favourite Clare Island claims a proud pre-emi-

* I have since learned that the more accurate observations of the engineers, appointed to complete the trigonometrical survey of Ireland, have determined its height to be 2,499 feet.

nence. To the north lie the dark mountains and moors of Erris, with the huge, rounded mass of Nephim, standing, as it were, to sentinel his own peculiar district; while to the east the mountain ranges gradually sink into the immeasurable plains, which extend from the shores of Lough Corrib far beyond Tuam, with but the single hill of Castle Hacket, to break this "weary waste expanding to the skies."

But the point to which the eye turns the most frequently, and with the greatest interest, is the bay and town of Westport, lying apparently at your very feet. Westport, with its white houses peeping forth from out its surrounding woods, looks extremely well from this height: and Clew Bay, besides its elegant shape and shores, displays an assemblage of numberless low islets and reefs, that have a most singular effect; but which, picturesque though they be, must render the navigation among them both difficult and perilous. The bay is bounded to the north by the fine rocks of Achil Island, within whose secluded wilds

are said to linger the most curious specimens of the olden manners and customs of the west.

Much to my disappointment, the Cunnemarra Mountains were too near and too lofty to allow that commanding *coup d'œil* of the scene of our intended tour that I had expected. Little of Cunnemarra was visible, beyond the fine chain of mountains that enclose the Killeries ; but their scale and character were such as to inspire the highest idea of what must be the real grandeur of the district they embrace.

Turning from the rich and varied panorama that surrounded us to the spot whereon we stood, we found the summit of Croagh Patrick, which from every side appears so pointed, to consist of an acre or more of tolerably level ground, covered with loose stones.

I suppose none of my readers can be ignorant of the legends connected with this celebrated mountain, on whose lofty brow Erin's tutelar Saint collected all the poisonous reptiles of the island, and then "bothered the Varmint," by pitching them all into the neighbouring sea.

It has been held in grateful veneration ever since, and is even yet a favourite "station," or place of penance, in high odour of Catholic sanctity. Upon the top is a rude altar, which the votaries are obliged to approach on their bare knees, reciting certain prayers : after which they run seven times round the summit with naked feet, repeating a prescribed number of Aves and Credos. A young couple, apparently a man and his wife, were engaged in this very *useful and edifying* ceremony of the Romish church, during the time we were there : it was indeed melancholy to witness such a specimen of superstition in the nineteenth century.

We remained above an hour on the top, in deep enjoyment of the prospect, which one of the loveliest days I ever recollect invested with additional charms : we then descended by a somewhat different route. On reaching Westport, our limbs and our appetites bore undeniable witness to our having had ten or eleven hours of pretty good exercise.

Before taking leave of Westport, as I shall never again be so near to the point, I may

be allowed to mention the few particulars I learned of the remote district of Erris, which comprises the north-west portion of Mayo; and where the scenery of "The Wild Sports of the West" is laid. It is, I understood, a very savage, uncultivated tract, little known or visited; although some good roads have been made through it of late years. It belongs chiefly to three proprietors, Carter, Bingham, and Sir R. O'Donnell.

The interior of the country, with the exception of the range of Mount Nephim, is in general flat and boggy, and covered with heath, which affords some of the best grouse-shooting to be met with in Ireland: but even there six or seven brace are considered a capital day's sport. In fact, in Ireland, with very few exceptions, there is no shooting worth speaking of, but woodcock, snipe, and water-fowl. The country is too open, the cabins too much scattered over the surface, and the little yelping curs too numerous and noisy, to permit partridges to be plentiful; and pheasants are only a recent importation.

I was informed that the salmon fishery of Newport is good; and that of Ballycroy better: as also that there might be very excellent angling in the Owen More, and other streams, if proper attention were paid to them. The sea-coast is very rugged: but Black Sod Bay is remarkably safe and commodious.

Throughout Erris there is little or no public accommodation to be had, except at the metropolis, Ballmullett: and, as might be expected from their remoteness and want of communication with the rest of the world, the modes of living and of thinking of the natives are extremely curious. Want of time alone prevented me, on this occasion, from attempting to penetrate into this unknown but interesting region, as I hope to do on my next visit to Green Erin.

Having nothing to detain us at Westport, we started on the morning of July 9, in a car for Delphi, a lodge belonging to Lord Sligo, but now tenanted by Captain St. George. It is situated near the upper end of the Killeries;

and is distant sixteen miles of very tolerable road from Westport.

The first part of our journey presented little to interest us : but, somewhat more than half-way, we came to a rather steep ascent called Scheefry, from the top of which we commanded a very fine mountain view. Around and before us were an assemblage of rocks and mountains, of greatly differing forms and aspects, and of really imposing masses. Far below, at our feet, lay a considerable lake, dotted with islands, and said to contain very fine brown trout.

From this point down to Delphi the scenery varies much, but still preserves the character of a grand mountain pass. We followed a small rivulet, till it fell into Lough Duloch ; whose dark waters, overhung by lofty and steep rocks, seemed to bar our further progress. Here the road turning abruptly to the left, we entered the narrow valley which conveys the streams of this district into the Killery Bay : and soon after arrived at Captain St. George's most hospitable and pleasant residence.

Delphi was built for a sporting lodge by Lord Sligo; and within is well planned, as without it is romantically situated. For one fond of fishing I have seen few more eligible sites on the same scale. It stands immediately upon a small lake, with the extensive Lough Duloch close above it. Through these two lakes flows a considerable stream, much frequented both by white trout and salmon. There is a fishery at its mouth; but, as no weirs are allowed on it, a constant and plentiful supply of these beautiful visitants of our fresh waters is insured, both in the river and in the lakes, whenever a flood enables them to run up from the sea. Unfortunately, during our stay, the water was much too low to admit of fishing in the river; and we were therefore driven to trust for sport to the lakes. But here again, unfortunately, there was in general so little wind, and from so unfavourable a quarter, that we had no chance of doing justice to the acknowledged capabilities of the place.

Upon our arrival we found that our host had strolled down with some friends to the small

village of Bundurrach, at the embouchure of the river: we therefore took our rods and followed him. I tried a few casts in one or two of the best pools of the river; but there was not sufficient wind to give me the least hope of success. We afterwards fished the lower lake for a short time; but with the same result, from the same cause. We were therefore all very willing to adjourn to the Lodge, where the kindest hospitality and most agreeable society soon made us forget our morning's disappointment.

The situation of Delphi Lodge is, as I have already remarked, highly picturesque. It stands on a considerable elevation, above a small lake fringed with young plantations; and is backed by a very lofty, rugged, and precipitous mountain: while on all other sides it looks out upon majestic ranges of the same character, which give glimpses, through their several gorges, of still loftier and more savage ranges beyond. It is a fine Alpine solitude: and, though not in Cunnemarra proper, gave me a very favourable impression of what I

might expect the stern beauties of that wild region to be. Captain St. George has the right of shooting over all these mountains : and I believe they afford as many grouse as most parts of Ireland can boast.

The entrance hall of this sporting lodge is appropriately ornamented with the endless insignia of the angler and the shooter ; nor want there in other apartments some reminiscences of the favourite pursuits of our entertaining host.

The Marquis of Anglesea dined and slept at Delphi, on his tour through Cunnemarra : but this was during the time that he was believed to be a better friend to the Established Church than he was afterwards considered ; or he would hardly have experienced so warm a reception from his most kind-hearted but most Protestant entertainer.

A tourist, in my opinion, has no right to make public the private details of the domestic circles into which he is kindly admitted ; and I shall therefore say nothing of the feast of reason and the flow of *bowl*, which we enjoyed

here and elsewhere ; although they will not the less for that live long in my grateful recollection.

Early the next morning I gave the lower lake a second trial, which was almost as unsuccessful as the former, from the same want of a breeze ; and we therefore determined after breakfast to fish Lough Duloch, as it was more exposed to the wind then blowing. Duloch, or, more properly, Dubh Lough, *i. e.* the Black Lake, is much larger than the lower lake, being about three miles in length ; and is environed, especially on its western side, by very precipitous rocks, behind which tower the steepest and sternest mountains imaginable. The scenery is altogether of a very wild and even grand character : not a vestige of a cabin, not a patch of cultivated ground, is to be seen. In these respects, it is very characteristic of the general features of the Cunnemarra scenery : for which reason I consider myself very fortunate in being able to present my readers with an engraving, from a sketch taken on the spot by that well-known artist and author, Mr.

Lover. It forms the frontispiece to the second volume of this little work.

Our boatman was a curious old fellow, who usually went by the name of "Briddawn," (the Irish for "salmon.") He was quite a study of a peculiar class of Irishmen ; reclaimed from being a *whole* poacher by being made a *half* sort of keeper ; shrewd, observant, humorous, with not a few *buts* to relieve the bright side of his character. Under Briddawn's direction, we tried the most likely spots for salmon : and gradually worked our way up to the very head of the lake, where, as is always the case, are the most white trout.

For the first two or three hours we had as much wind as we could desire, though from the worst possible quarter : it afterwards entirely failed us. I rose three salmon ; one of which, at least, I think I ought to have hooked. Briddawn afterwards rose and killed the same fish, after a smart struggle, with a light rod : he proved to be a red spring fish of about eight pounds. The old man's ill-suppressed triumph over me, on this occasion, was not the least

amusing event of the day. At the head of the lake we killed a few fine sea trout ; and, I dare say, might have had very good sport with them if the breeze had continued.

I was certainly much disappointed with my *coup d'essai* at Delphi ; where I am well convinced that, under favourable circumstances, as good rod-fishing may be had as in almost any part of Cunnemarra. However, it was not for the first time I learned that an angler must often meet with such reverses, or he would not so much enjoy his success when it does occasionally arrive.

The next morning the same wind and weather continued : and, our time being very limited, we at once decided on bidding adieu to our kind host and hostess ; and took a boat from Bundurrach, to our next quarters at Renvyle, the hospitable mansion of the well-known authors of the “ Letters from the Irish Highlands.”

The distance is about twelve miles by water : the first half passing through the Killeries, the latter part across a bay of the “ broad At-

lantic.” These twelve miles comprise some of the very finest scenery to be found in the whole of Cunnemarra.* In fact, it is hardly correct to consider a great part of this scenery as belonging to Cunnemarra, which is the name given only to the south-western portion of this district. The northern side of the Killeries belongs to Morisk; and the southern shore, towards the head of the bay, is called “Joyce’s Country.” Still, in common parlance, under the title of Cunnemarra is, I think, usually understood the mountain district, bounded on the east by Lough Corrib, &c.; on the west by the Atlantic; on the south by the Bay of Galway; and to the north running up nearly to Clew Bay.

The nucleus, as it were, of this rocky region is the lofty and broken chain of the Twelve Pins, from which diverge, in every direction, several minor ranges; there being little or no

* This word is perhaps more frequently spelled *Connemara*. In spelling it as I have done, I have followed the orthography preferred by Mr. Blake of Renvyle, as considering him the best possible guide in such matters. The word, I believe, is allusive to the coast being indented with many bays.

extent of level land. These mountains, as may be divined from their name, do not consist of tame, monotonous ridges ; but rise into independent peaks, whose serrated outline and precipitous sides form the most striking feature of every landscape into which they enter. Their geological character displays varieties of mica slate, and of the quartzose formation. The highest of the Pins is called Ben Bane, or the White Mountain ; and, according to the last trigonometrical survey, is 2,396 feet above the level of the sea. Several of the other points are within a few feet of the same height : and Müllrea, at the entrance of the Great Killery, is stated, upon the same authority, to be 2,680 feet high.

The interior of this district is very thinly inhabited, but contains many lakes, and much scenery of a secluded, romantic character. On the shores of Lough Corrib, and of the sea, are two or three small towns, such as Oughterard, Cliffden, and Roundstone ; near each of which reside a very few proprietors.

The Cunnemarra peasantry are a race of

fine made, hardy, and well disposed mountaineers ; whose chief subsistence is derived from the rearing of cattle and sheep, and sea-fishing. They have little commerce or intercourse with even the neighbouring counties ; and no manufacture, with the trifling exception of the woollen stockings, for which their females have long been deservedly celebrated.

This province, indeed, seemed completely and entirely shut out from the rest of the world, until, a few years ago, Mr. Nimmo was employed by Government to construct various roads through its interior, which might, in some degree, bring it within the pale of the British empire : but even now it is in a very primitive state.

The subdivision of this district, called Joyce's Country, has obtained its appellation from being chiefly inhabited by a clan of that name ; who are, in general, such extraordinarily tall and powerful men, as to be universally designated "The Big Joyces." One of the most remarkable specimens of this race keeps a small public house, at a place called

Leenane, towards the upper end of the Killeries, where the Westport, Maam, and Clifden roads unite. He commonly is known by the name of "Shawn na Bawn," (*John of the head*, I believe,) and is immensely tall, stout, and strong, with a most stentorian voice—in short, just what is here called "a big lump of a man." He has also two big sons; one of whom promises to equal the paternal size and strength. As he is a kind of "Lion" in the country, I am sorry that our route did not permit us to visit him. We might, indeed, have crossed over from Bundurrach, and ridden or walked to Renvyle, along the southern shore of the Killeries. But, besides that this road was very bad and very much longer, we should not have seen the scenery to such advantage as from the water. For all these reasons, we naturally preferred taking our ease in our own boat; which, through the kind offices of Captain St. George, we were able to hire at a moderate price. We had an excellent boat, with four good rowers, for which we agreed to pay ten shillings, to include every thing.

I have before said that the shores of the Killeries comprise some of the finest scenery I saw in Cunnemarra ; but I much fear that I shall find it impossible to convey any adequate conception, not only of their beauties, but of their peculiar character.

The Great Killery—for there are two inlets that bear this title—is a very long and narrow bay, enclosed within high and very noble mountains, which sink perpendicularly into the water. Its northern shore is formed by the chain of Müllrea and the other Morisk Mountains, which are as precipitous and savage as the imagination can well conceive. The head of the bay is finely closed by the Joyce Country Hills ; on which border the magnificent ranges belonging to the Twelve Pins, and extending along the whole of its southern shore. Softer and fairer scenes may doubtless be met with elsewhere ; but not many bolder, more striking, and I might almost add, more sublime.

I do not remember to have seen any where in Great Britain so long and narrow a bay, confined within such a splendid barrier of lofty

and impending mountains. It is this that gives the Great Killery its peculiar and most romantic character ; which conveys the idea rather of a sea-pass, or ocean gorge, if I may so term it, than of a bay. The entrance to it is extremely narrow : but within is most excellent anchorage ; and of course safety from every wind. The only thing that diminished my enjoyment of this extraordinary scene was the regret that we had not been able to reverse our route ; as I should imagine the effect must be much greater on entering this contracted defile from the open sea. The best point for obtaining a *coup d'œil* of the whole scenery is from the summit of the pass of Sallruck, on the southern shore : but, unfortunately, not being aware of this until afterwards, we passed close under it, without landing, as we should have done.

The mouth of this singular bay is so confined by closing rocks, that, until we were quite near to it, we could not possibly guess where the passage might be. Upon at length emerging from this narrow portal, we entered upon a

wide and beautiful arm of Clew Bay, across which we stretched in a straight line for the "Big Hill of Renvyle," at whose feet lay Mr. Blake's hospitable mansion, where we had been invited to spend a few days. We found Mr. Blake waiting on the beach to receive us ; and were immediately conducted to the house, and introduced to the family.

CHAPTER IX.

Renvyle — Improvements in Cunnemarra — Splendid Scenery
— Kylemore Lakes — Botanical Adventure — Cliffden —
An Irish Fair — Mismanagement of Roads in Ireland —
Accommodations in Cunnemarra.

IN recording the few but happy days I passed at Renvyle, I think that, without improperly intruding upon the privacy of domestic life, I may briefly allude to what must become known to every tourist through this secluded province, and what indeed has been partly mentioned by Mr. Blake himself, in the excellent little work to which I have before referred, “Letters from the Irish Highlands of Cunnemarra,” well known to be written by him and his sisters-in-law.

Mr. Blake is a very talented and well-informed *gentleman*, in every sense of the word ;

educated at Eton and Christ Church. Accident, as he himself describes, brought him, many years ago, to inspect a detached property he possessed at Renvyle ; which so much pleased and interested him, that he eventually determined to settle on this farthest verge of Christendom. He has built a large and commodious house, which he has fitted up in the neatest and most comfortable manner.

For many years he has actively employed himself in introducing into this wilderness every improvement that his extensive information and a very sanguine temperament could suggest. He has necessarily sunk a great deal of money upon this speculation, which, however, I fear, has not answered so well as his intelligence and activity merited. Whether this failure be solely attributable to the change in the English currency, as he himself thinks, or whether to his having attempted chimerical improvements, unsuited to the climate and people, as his less enterprising neighbours seem to imagine, I cannot judge. I can only express my great and sincere regret that the

efforts of a very intelligent and amiable proprietor, to ameliorate a remote but most interesting district, should not have been crowned with all the success which every friend of the country would desire.

The neighbourhood, at least, must have been benefited by these attempts. Much money has been spent in it ; much employment given to the poor : a great extent of unprofitable land has been brought under cultivation, and the best breeds of Durham cows, sheep, and pigs, introduced into this wild province. Mr. Blake appears to have given up his agricultural speculations for the present ; and to be satisfied that, in these times, at least, they are not profitable or feasible.

He is, on many accounts, a most interesting and instructive companion ; and, being familiarly acquainted with the rocky fastnesses, amid which he has fixed his dwelling, can give the best information on every point connected with them. Indeed, a tour through Cunne-marra, which does not comprehend a few days' visit to Renvyle, must lose much of its advan-

tage, as well as enjoyment. We spent four or five days here, most agreeably and profitably. The weather, during the whole time, was splendid; and the scenery such as left nothing for the lover of the picturesque to desire.

From several points in the neighbourhood of Renvyle is commanded one of the finest panoramic views that can any where be seen. This view commences to the northward with Achil Head, a very tall and romantic cliff, and thence extends southward over the whole of Clew Bay, with its thousand islands. It embraces a long range of the Erris and Mayo Mountains, the Cone of Croagh Patrick, the Killeries, with Müllrea guarding the entrance on one side, and lofty Bencoona on the other. To the southward of these appear the broken summits of the Twelve Pins, until the prospect is finally closed by the promontory and Hill of Renvyle.

These, with a boundless expanse of the western ocean, are the main features of the landscape; but, from their meagre detail, no

worthy idea can be formed of the magnificence and effect of the whole. The bay is most beautifully curved; the numerous islands and islets picturesquely shaped, and most happily disposed, just where wanted; while, for their height, none can exceed in grandeur or variety of form the several mountains that constitute, as it were, the framework of the picture.

But I must be content with this vague, general description, and not attempt any further to individualize the scene, which, I am well aware, a much more able and more practised pen than mine would fail to place vividly and distinctly before the reader. No! — impressions may be recorded; and they who have the talent for such descriptions may present a succession of pleasing and delightful images to the mind's eye; but I doubt whether even Sir W. Scott ever succeeded in conveying so correct a conception of any locality to his readers, that, upon afterwards seeing the spot itself, they would not be struck with the difference between the reality and the ideal picture drawn from his eloquent delineation.

During the few days that I had this magnificent panorama before me, I saw it from several points of view, under various accidents of light and shade, and was always greatly charmed with it. The tints of the sky are proverbially lovely in this extreme western clime, especially at sunset; but, I must confess, we were not favoured with any very extraordinary effects, although we regularly every day left the dinner table to witness the sun go down beneath the dark-heaving waves of the Atlantic.

We were, at any rate, favoured during our whole stay with a succession of such fine weather as is not always enjoyed in this, "the next parish to America," and were thus enabled to see the scenery to the greatest advantage. The bright and cloudless skies were not equally propitious to my favourite pursuit of angling, for which, however, I soon found that Renvyle would under no circumstances have afforded any great facilities.

About two miles distant is a salmon-fishery, belonging to Mr. Blake, at the head of Ballinakill Bay. The stream is small, but, being

much resorted to both by sea trout and salmon, would offer good sport after every flood, were it not for a weir, which completely obstructs any fish from passing beyond it. This river issues out of a chain of small lakes, situate about four or five miles from its mouth. The largest and finest of these is called Kylemore, to which we one morning rode from Renvyle. Our principal inducement was to enjoy its romantic scenery; but we also took our rods, in the faint hope of being able to entice some of the fish that might have run up in the spring floods. The wind was much too light and the heavens too bright to admit of any great sport: I merely succeeded in rising two spring salmon, which would not take the fly, and caught a few large sea trout, that had evidently been a considerable time in the fresh water, being very dark-coloured. We slaughtered, besides, an infinity of gubbahawns (*i. e.* "clumsy heads") as they have christened the small, big-headed, lough-trout, which in all these lakes are a great annoyance to the salmon-fisher, obliging him to be eternally wheeling

up his line, to take them off the hook. They afforded a great fund of amusement to Blake's fine young boys, who diverted themselves by trailing their lines behind the boat, until they had got a gubbahawn on every fly.

We came, however, on this occasion, to admire the picturesque grandeur of Kylemore, and in that we were certainly not disappointed. This lake is two or three miles in length, and lies at the very foot of some lofty mountains, which belong to the chain of the Twelve Pins. Their precipitous sides are for the most part covered with blue heather, but are occasionally broken by bold, naked rocks, which jut prominently out from the line of the hills. Nor want there patches of copsewood green, wherever the tumbling cascades have worn their rocky bed, and at the same time diffused freshness around. Beyond the lake is a considerable plain, extending up to the base of Maam Turk, along whose rugged sides I could distinctly trace the winding path that leads by that wild mountain-pass to Cong. Upon looking back towards the lower extremity of the lake, I was

particularly struck with the very graceful curve in which two fine mountains descend from either side to its margin, and seem to embrace its blue waters within their mighty arms.

In some of these hills are found good specimens of silicious crystals, which the natives call diamonds; and I have no doubt that they would all minister an abundant harvest to the mineralogist. The strata are often traversed by basalt or whin dykes: but I heard of no instance of this rock constituting an independent formation, as it does, for instance, near Edinburgh and on the western coast of Scotland.

This district is remarkably rich in botanical treasures, to cull which its wildest moors and mountains have been not unfrequently trodden. It does not, however, appear to be always perfectly safe to indulge in these scientific pursuits, if I may judge by an adventure which befel a visiter, and indeed relative, of Mr. Blake's, and which, as illustrative of the characters of these mountaineers, I cannot resist mentioning.

This gentleman was a first-rate and most

enthusiastic botanist ; and, day after day, was to be seen climbing every hill, and examining every bog, with his tin case at his back. It was during the time that the cholera was at its height, and the country people unfortunately got it into their heads that he was a French Doctor, sent into Cunnemarra by Government, for the humane and natural purpose of inoculating that province with the dreaded plague. They accordingly one day seized him, while examining some rare specimens of their Flora, and were proceeding to stop his further dissemination of the poison by tearing him in pieces. It was with great difficulty that he succeeded in postponing this undesirable consummation, and persuading them to accompany him to Ren-vyle, in order to satisfy themselves that he was no French Doctor, but a relative of Mr. Blake's, whom they all knew well enough to feel assured that he would never introduce the cholera into their country, amongst his improvements.

A gentleman, highly worthy of credit, assured me that he had talked with many of the people concerned in this outrage, and remonstrated

with them on the wickedness of putting an innocent fellow-creature to death. Their answer was—“And sure enough, good right he had to be put to death! Wasn't it fitter, and more proper too, that he should die than that we should all of us perish, and our wives and childher?”

“Why, what can you mean?”

“Why, I mean that I saw him myself, with these blessed eyes, go up that hill there, into the holes and corners, and, when he thought nobody was watching him, he opened that curious case that he always carries at his back, and which, sure enough, no Christian ought to have; and as soon as ever he'd opened it, out came a tall black pillar of smoke, that spread over all the country; and wherever it touched cot or cabin, they all took the cholera right away. I saw it with my own eyes! and didn't he then deserve to die?”

With these feelings and impressions on their minds, it is only wonderful how the innocent botanist escaped out of their hands.

A short distance from Renvyle House is the

small village of Tully, where once was an indifferent inn, now untenanted. And not far from the village is a considerable lake, full of very fine brown trout: there not being a boat upon it, I was unable to give it a trial. I was also informed that near Sallruck is a lake which contains great quantities of both white and brown trout.

I have nowhere seen purer looking sea-water than on this coast, which tempted us almost every morning to take a most delicious bath. Vast numbers of fish are caught here; and, if only the means of the people were greater, the fisheries would doubtless be much more productive.

But, for all details of the mode of living, condition, and customs, of the inhabitants of this district, I cannot do better than refer my reader to the oft-quoted "Letters from the Irish Highlands."

On Tuesday, July 16th, we quitted our agreeable quarters at Renvyle, in a car, for which we had sent to Clifden. The distance to that place is about twelve miles, and the road is as

good as could be expected in so mountainous and unfrequented a country. After passing Ballinakill Bay, which possesses considerable beauty, we entered a wild moorland, whose bleak aspect was by no means improved by the dense mist that had gradually overspread the landscape.

It happened to be the day of a great fair at Cliffdén, and we met crowds of people returning from it on horseback and on foot, double and single, with cattle and without cattle, drunk and (I believe a few) sober. As usual, the men were tall, fine-looking fellows. I looked, however, in vain for any "boys" from Joyce's Country, much above six feet high. As we approached Cliffdén, the numbers, the noise, and the drunkenness, rapidly increased; but when at length we reached the town, there appeared no scarcity of lads, and lassies too, to keep the fair alive.

An Irish fair is always well worth seeing; but a Cunnemarra fair is doubly so. There had been in the morning a great sale of cattle; but all business was finished long before we

arrived, and amusement was now the order of the evening.

I walked out into the crowded main street, to see what was going on, and found there the usual stalls for eatables and finery, as in a provincial fair of England.

Amongst these were to be seen many uncouth young mountaineers, gaping and staring at every thing around them, as if they had never before been in a town. There were also parading up and down no small number of young damsels, decked out in the smartest cottons and muslins of Manchester and Glasgow.

An Irish peasant girl seldom appears to advantage in her holiday costume, from the awkward manner in which she bears the unwonted labour of new and creaking shoes, which are only worn on these grand occasions. Added to which, I must own that, although here and there an uncommonly handsome face might be observed, with glossy black hair and still darker and more brilliant eyes, yet the features of the generality were decidedly not pretty, and very

many of the heads were embellished with a frizzled mass of red hair.

I was much amused at the national fondness for a bit of diversion. No sooner was the sharp clang of the sticks heard in a distant part of the fair than all the promenaders, men and women, boys and girls, rushed in an instant to the spot, to witness the fight; without which an Irish fair is considered to pass off very flatly.

A faction of the Kings had come up from Roundstone, for the purpose of fighting another faction; but, contrary to all Cunnemarra ideas of equity, a strong body of the police marched up, and most illnaturally put an end to the fun. A few heads, &c. were indeed broken in the course of the evening, but nothing worth mentioning.

The very existence of a body of police here is an extraordinary spectacle, which would have been but little expected a very few years since, when a great proprietor could "thank God, that the king's writ was not worth one farthing in Cunnemarra." But, since roads have been made, which have opened these wilds to the

encroachments of civilization, the dominion of the law has gradually won its way, and not only Peelers but excisemen and process-servers are now to be seen within the once enchanted circle of Cunnemarra.

Cliffden itself, or Ardbear, for such was its ancient appellation, is a most extraordinary creation. Fifteen or sixteen years ago there was hardly a single house here, and now there is a very considerable town, chiefly of the better kind of houses, which may justly be considered the capital of the district. It has been built by people from all parts of Ireland, who have flocked hither to avail themselves of the facilities offered by the proprietor; he very wisely not choosing to build himself, but holding out favourable terms to those that would.

The great proprietor of this neighbourhood is Mr. D'Arcy, whose castle is about a mile and a half lower down the bay, at the head of which the town is situated. He is the rival chieftain to Mr. Martin; and of course there is no great love between them. Neither is this feeling of jealousy likely to be diminished by the start

which Clifden has got before Martin's own pet little metropolis at Roundstone. Each place possesses certain advantages over the other; and, as the district cannot support two capitals, it was probable that whichever took the decided lead would retain it. Of the two, however, Clifden seems the most central situation for the exports and imports of Cunnemarra. Its bay also, though not perhaps equal to that of Roundstone, is commodious, and affords good anchorage; but it has one or two dangerous reefs near its entrance, on which a lighthouse must be built, if ever it becomes a place of much trade.

Clifden, as well as every other part of this province, suffers much from the shameful state into which certain parts of the road between it and Oughterard have been allowed to fall.

The mismanagement of the roads in Ireland, and particularly in the West, has long been a just cause of complaint. As I have not before alluded to the subject, and as it may serve as an illustration to the English reader of some of the practical evils under which Ireland is

labouring, I will briefly mention the system which Irish proprietors themselves concurred in assuring me is too generally pursued.

Any landowner wanting a new road, or the repair of an old one, lays the case before the petty sessions; where if it be favourably received, as from his local influence it usually is, it is next submitted to the grand jury of the county, at the following assizes. Should he there succeed, he obtains what is called a "presentment," for such a length of road, at so much a perch. This he divides among his tenants, who lay out perhaps one-tenth of the labour upon the work that the money would purchase, and with the rest pay their rent. It is indeed necessary, before receiving the money, to make oath that they have actually expended the amount of it upon the road; but, as Mr. Graydon says in his work upon Ireland, "there is not a fraction in arithmetic sufficiently minute to express the value of this affidavit." Some of the more conscientious, indeed, have been positively known to *put the money down on the road*, and take it up again, in order to

be able to swear that they have actually *laid out the money upon the road!* but the majority swallow the oath without any such preliminary qualification.

Such iniquities are so totally unable to bear the light that they are rapidly diminishing; and the alteration in the grand jury laws will, I trust, soon make them but matters of melancholy history.

It would be infinitely better if a surveyor were appointed for each county, to report upon and to superintend the making and repairing of all roads; or, better still, if one such general superintendent were chosen for every three or four counties, with agents under him, and with a salary sufficiently liberal to place him above the necessity of exercising his own private profession, and thereby put him beyond the temptation of being biassed by any partiality to his employers.

The roads in Cunnemarra have been constructed by Government, but have been marked by mismanagement of a different kind, though nearly as mischievous. All agree in the exist-

ence of the evil : but it is not so easy to discover its cause.

Mr. Nimmo, the original engineer, is allowed to have been very clever, particularly in tracing out the line of a road ; his chief failing appears to have been that he was too fond of commencing more than he could complete. The consequence of this has been that pieces of road have been well and properly made here and there ; while, perhaps, the whole line is rendered useless by a mile or two that is unfinished or impassable. For instance, I learned that there were only two or three places between Flinn's and Ballinahinch, that prevented carriages from coming all the way from Oughterard to Clifden : but these were so bad as to render the road totally impassable after rains ; and, indeed, at all, other times, except with the assistance of the peasantry. The case was exactly the same on the road between Maam and Joyce's House : and thus the communication of the whole district was stopped by what a few days' labour might rectify.

One great cause of this unfortunate state of

things, no doubt, is, that those employed on these public works have not been regularly paid. Great complaints were made against Mr. Nimmo in this respect : and even now that the roads of this district have fallen into the hands of a very upright and intelligent engineer, Mr. Killaly, the abuse is by no means removed. I found it quite impossible to ascertain to whom the blame ought to attach : some wishing to charge it upon the engineer, others upon the Government, and, not a few, upon Lord Anglesea personally, who, they said, had ordered the works without any authority of Parliament, under the impression that he could pay for them out of the Fisheries' fund ; but had afterwards found that he could not raise the money.

At any rate, with whomsoever may rest the blame, the effect is that the people, who had given up the necessary work of their own little farms, to labour upon these roads, cannot get the remuneration to which they are entitled, and are, consequently, in great distress. It is really a shameful business, whosoever may be

in fault ; and must have a very injurious effect upon any future public works that may be attempted. Mr. Killaly himself told me that he believed the money set apart for the Cunne-marra roads had been appropriated to the more pressing exigencies of the cholera : and, I suppose, the Government have since been too much occupied by weightier matters, to bestow sufficient attention to this distant corner of the empire ; while some of the proprietors are said to have viewed the introduction of roads into their mountain principality with so little favour as not to be likely to refresh their memories. The consequence of all this is, that the new roads are at a complete stand-still, and those already made daily getting more and more out of repair. I am not, however, without hope that the evil complained of may be partly redressed, even before these volumes see the light, as very strong representations were, I know, made in quarters where they were likely to be of use.

I should almost be afraid that more roads have been undertaken than the district will be

able to keep in proper repair. Those already finished are all correctly laid down in the accompanying map, with the distances between the principal places, and the seats of all the chief resident proprietors. I am indebted for this sketch to the kindness of Mr. Killaly, and have been induced to insert it from the extreme inaccuracy of all the common maps. A good general map of Ireland is, indeed, as yet a desideratum (*valde desiderandum*), and must so remain until the publication of the Ordnance Survey, which seems most unaccountably delayed.

Whilst I am upon the general subject of the means of intercourse at present possessed by Cunnemarra, I may as well allude briefly to a kindred subject of equal interest and importance to the tourist, namely, the accommodation that it affords.

I must premise that, through the introduction of my excellent *compagnon de voyage*, we were received or invited into most of the houses of the few resident gentlemen; and scarcely one tourist passes through this coun-

try without more or less sharing their hospitality.

But, independent of all private introductions, the public accommodation is much better than I had expected. Very tolerable quarters may be found at Maam, Clifden, and Roundstone ; at all of which cars are also kept. A couple of clean beds may be had at Flinn's, as also, I understand, at Big Joyce's, of Leenane. When to these necessary items you add plenty of good mutton, poultry, fish, bread, &c. ; and no lack of whisky, or potatoes, a mountain tourist, or sportsman, has no right to complain.

Accommodations may also be had in a better sort of cabin near Dean Mahon's, on Lough Garromin, not far from Ballinahinch ; and M'Corrick, who rents Mr. Blake's fishery at the head of Ballinakill Bay, talks also of having a room or two ready by next year for a summer guest or angler.

CHAPTER X.

Ballinahinch House, Lake, and River — Salmon killed — Irish Heath — Boat-race — Clifden Castle — Whisky Punch — Abundance of Salmon at Ballinahinch — Roundstone — The Doctor — Voyage to Invermore — Assemblage of an Angling Party.

FROM this general account of Cunnemarra, however, I must now descend to the particulars of my own adventures. On the morning after the fair, we took a car from Clifden to Ballinahinch, the well-known residence of Mr. Martin, the greatest landowner in the province, and member of parliament for the county. The distance is about seven miles, and, with a very little trouble, might be made a capital road; but there are what a Frenchman would call a few *mauvais pas*, particularly at a small stream

which bounds the D'Arcy and Martin properties.

Immediately on quitting Clifden we passed up a brawling, rocky, mountain-stream, where are a few trout and occasionally salmon ; but, the fall at its mouth into the sea being very high, they can only pass in great floods : and the erection of a brewery and distillery there has latterly quite spoiled it.

As we advanced, we caught very fine views of that part of the range of the Twelve Pins which forms the Ballinahinch Mountains, and of which Lettery seems the *avant-garde*. We passed several lakes, one, in particular, of considerable extent and beauty, along whose shores the road ran for about a mile. A short way beyond, we saw to our left the hill in which are situated Mr. Martin's famous marble-quarries. He has made a road to them at a vast expence ; but they are not now worked. I saw many specimens of the strata found there, which I understood to consist entirely of indurated steatite of the most beautiful light green and gold colours, with varieties of dark green ser-

entine. We crossed a bridge, which is famed as being entirely built of this marble, and soon after came in sight of the "Big House of Ballinahinch."

It is a tolerably large building, with very little external pretensions to architecture, though said to be very commodious within. Art has done little to embellish it with the grounds usually seen about a gentlemen's place: but Nature has provided it with a landscape, for which many an English nobleman would willingly exchange half his park. The mansion is situated on the top of a ridge, looking southwards, down the course of the river, to the bay of Roundstone; and northwards across a fine lake, at its very foot, up to the magnificent assemblage of the Twelve Pins. It is a splendid view.

This lake is remarkable both for its extent and beauty; but immediately above it (though not visible from Ballinahinch) is another lake called Lough Inagh, which is incomparably more beautiful. It lies completely enveloped within the rocky recesses of the Twelve Pins;

and was universally described to me as singularly romantic and lovely. I must again express my regret that the limited time we could devote to our present tour, conjoined with my partiality for salmon-fishing, obliged me to defer till my next visit to this interesting country the examination of its scenery. I trust, however, that the period is not very distant when I shall have the opportunity of exploring at leisure not only the lone waters of Lough Inagh, but also much of the neighbourhood of Ballinahinch, which, I am sure, would amply repay the lover of the picturesque.

But all this time the car is standing before the door of the "Big House."

Mr. Martin we knew was in London, and Mrs. and Miss Martin we found were confined by a severe attack of influenza; we therefore could not see either of them. A very polite message of regrets was, however, sent down to my companion, together with unlimited permission to take, kill, and destroy, as many salmon as we liked — or rather, *as we could*: of which permission we proceeded immediately to avail ourselves.

Ballinahinch House is situated at the lower end of the last of a chain of lakes, which run into the very heart of the mountains and collect their waters. These are discharged into the sea by a small river of about two miles in length, which would afford the most splendid angling possible if it were not for the weirs near its mouth, that for the greater part of the year allow no salmon to pass above them. They are placed exactly at the point where the spring tides reach ; and, the distance from them to the sea being not more than a quarter of a mile, the space for fishing is very limited : so also is the time, as a great part of each tide is lost by the river being full of salt water, in which, I have before observed, a salmon will rarely, if ever, take the fly. Besides this, Mr. Martin's fishermen are constantly employed in netting such parts as it is possible for them to draw ; but there are fortunately two or three of the best pools too rocky for them to think of attempting.

With all these disadvantages, such is the prodigious number of fish frequenting this river, that, if there be a tolerable breeze upon it, very

good sport may almost always be insured ; but how inferior to what might be enjoyed, were the weirs only removed a couple of miles higher up, near to the House !

These weirs so completely prevent the fish from ascending beyond them, except in very high floods, and are so seldom opened all the year round, that I am above measure surprised to hear that this river continues to be as well supplied with salmon as it ever was, notwithstanding that the most of them are forced to spawn within the reach of the tide, instead of in purely fresh water. The price of salmon at Ballinahinch is extremely low, from the difficulty of transporting it to any market ; and, being necessarily salted, it sells for a less price than any other, even in Galway. Still this fishery, I was told, clears above five hundred pounds a year, and, I am convinced, might be rendered much more profitable.

Upon arriving at the river we found that an English gentleman was fishing the lower part, and therefore I commenced at a small but very deep and excellent pool, a short distance below

the salmon boxes, which is always well stocked with fish. Here I soon rose two or three salmon, one of which only I succeeded in hooking and killing after some very pretty sport ; he weighed exactly eight pounds and a half. Both my friend and myself rose one or two others at a famous point a little lower down, but we did not fairly hook them. Soon afterwards the tide coming in put an end to our hopes, and we returned to Clifden, though by another road than the one we had taken in the morning.

Before leaving the river, I had some conversation with the English gentleman above mentioned ; and learned that he and a friend had been a fortnight in the neighbourhood, lodging at the cabin I spoke of, near Dean Mahon's. They took it in turn to fish the river, and Lough Inagh : and I think he said six salmon were the most they had either of them killed in one day. The same gentleman also informed me that, during the early part of the previous summer, the fish had been able to pass the weirs : and that there had been, in consequence,

most splendid angling on Lough Inagh, particularly for white trout, of which he had himself killed extraordinary numbers. But this year, such had not been the case.

From the bridge over the Ballinahinch river to Clifden is eight miles, of very good level road, in excellent repair. We left the little town of Roundstone two or three miles to our left, and passed through a barren tract of flat bog-land, covered with thousands of small lakes, containing plenty of fair sized trout; but none very large. Many of these lakes, I dare say, have never been fished.

This district, and especially the hills above Roundstone, are said to be uncommonly rich in botanical rarities. The heaths particularly attracted my eye by their variety and beauty. I could any day in my walk, observe seven or eight kinds; including two or three white varieties, which seem to differ in little else than colour. Among them I also reckon the plant usually called the Irish heath, which is, I believe, peculiar to Cunnemarra. It is there found in great abundance, where it may be

seen on every rock or bank, trailing its long slender branches, covered with large, pink, bell-shaped flowers and leaves, the dark green of whose upper side contrasts well with the silvery gray of the under surface. To make it a true *Irish* heath, this elegant shrub is now, I understand, decided to be no heath at all, but classed among some other family of plants.

Near to Clifden, we crossed a large lake, into which the sea enters at high water ; and where there is, at times, tolerable salmon-fishing. The scenery about it is very pleasing ; and there are a few neat houses scattered along its banks. I was struck with the view we obtained of Clifden itself, soon after leaving this lake, where the town is seen standing on the opposite side of a deep ravine, at the head of its beautiful little bay.

The interest of the scene was also much increased by the circumstance of our arriving towards the conclusion of a boat race, which annually takes place here on occasion of the fair. There were a great number of small sailing boats, either engaged in or watching the

race, while the rocky shores were crowned with groups of spectators. The coast being very bold, and the bay of most elegant proportions, it may easily be conceived how picturesque and animated was the spectacle that greeted our eyes.

We were engaged to dine with Mr. D'Arcy, at Clifden Castle : and finding, upon our arrival there, that we had a spare hour before dinner, we employed it very delightfully in perambulating the grounds, &c. The house itself is in the castellated style ; but not of sufficiently imposing mass and grandeur for that kind of architecture. It is, however, placed in a judiciously sheltered position, on the side of a considerable hill, and commands a lovely view of the bay. The grounds that encompass it are pretty : and I was surprised to see how well the trees grew, uninjured by the western blasts.

About nine o'clock we sat down to dinner, in number above twenty ; of whom at least half joined us at the dinner table, they not having thought fit to enter the drawing-

room. The dining-room was a very spacious and handsome apartment, with a rich ceiling, in the style of Henry the Seventh's time: and the banquet itself, both in the various and abundant provisions, the retainers that crowded the lower end of the table, and the attendants, conveyed no bad idea of the ancient character of a mountain chief's hospitality, though blended with much of the usances of modern society.

Soon after dinner, when the ladies had withdrawn, whisky was introduced for those who preferred it; and I was much amused to witness the delighted rush, particularly of those "below the salt," to seize the punch tumblers. I have seldom known the true Milesian really like wine of any kind half so well as whisky punch; and, when successfully and scientifically compounded with the *raal* stuff of the right sort, it must be allowed to be a very pretty tippie. Good old spirit, distilled from the pure malt, is not only most agreeable to the palate, but seems to glide down to the very heart, filling it with good humour and

good fellowship, and putting you on the best of terms with yourself and every body else in the wide world!

A great deal, however, of what is called whisky is little else than a solution of vitriolic acid and soap. Much also of the excellence of the punch depends on the due proportion of the ingredients and the mode of mixing them. As for the latter, I learned from a veteran toper that the only way is to make the beverage "between two waters;" that is, to pour first a little boiling water on the sugar, then to insert the spirit, and incorporate them well: and lastly, to fill the glass with hot water, stirring the mixture well the whole time.

After a very late and jovial party, we returned to our inn, much pleased with Mr. D'Arcy's hospitalities, of which it was only our limited stay in the country that prevented our partaking more largely.

The next morning we moved our quarters to Roundstone, in order to be nearer the scene of our fishing operations. It is distant ten miles from Clifden; but about three miles from it

we left the car to take on our baggage to the inn, and walked a short mile down to the fishery of Ballinahinch. I there found a fisherman, whose services I had previously engaged, waiting for me : his name was Larry Cornely ; an honest, willing fellow, who ties flies pretty well, and is of course perfectly acquainted with the river.

This day we had the river to ourselves, and thought to commit great slaughter. Unfortunately, there was far too little wind ; in consequence of which, although the salmon were leaping in all directions, we did not hook one of them, and after toiling all the day were only able to catch a few white trout of about three-quarters of a pound each.

I certainly never saw a stream, for its size, so abundant in salmon as this. I watched the men draw the lowest pool, which is usually the best supplied with fish, but, from the rocky nature of its bottom, is the most difficult to be netted. I have no doubt whatever that they enclosed at least five hundred salmon ; but the net catching against the rocks and getting

torn, they landed only one hundred and thirteen, the average weight of which was seven or eight pounds ; but many were over twelve pounds : and one or two above twenty pounds. They assured me that they had once taken above twelve hundred fish at a single haul, of which not quite half were salmon, the rest being sea trout.

It was rather provoking, while gazing at these silvery multitudes splashing in the net, to think that I had been casting my most inviting flies among them, for the last hour, without any other result than perhaps tempting them to wheel round at the gaudy deceit, with cautious eye and closed mouth. That evening we returned considerably disappointed to our little inn at Roundstone, where we found very comfortable bed-rooms, plenty to eat and drink, and a very civil and obliging host and hostess.

Our privacy was, however, invaded, and considerable annoyance given us by two lodgers at the inn, who had been accustomed to discuss

their punch in the sitting room, now appropriated to us ; and who seemed to think that our arrival, far from being a bar to their usual festivities, was rather an inducement for an extra glass. Accordingly, the moment we had swallowed our dinner, they introduced themselves into our apartment, although there was another equally good room at liberty. They evidently expected to join our libations : and, as a man must be very objectionable, before a tourist ought to reject such an opportunity of seeing native manners, and acquiring local information, we were not so unsociable as to repel their advances.

It has been justly remarked that a real Irish gentleman is more finished and more agreeable than one of the same class in any other country ; but that a real Irish blackguard equally surpasses all other ragamuffins throughout the world. There is a shamelessness, an effrontery, a depth, in his blackguardism, that the vagabonds of less favoured lands may imitate but must not hope to equal. I have

seldom met with a better proof and exemplification of this truth than in one of our boon companions of this night. His mind seemed perfectly suited to the frame in which it was set. His ignorance, even of his own profession, was extreme; and his thoughts and sentiments were of the vulgarest and coarsest stamp. He was a sad drunken dog; and had previously annoyed more than one of Mrs. M'Cawley's guests.

As his countenance and character gradually developed themselves in their full deformity, under the influence of whisky, I could not help imagining the misery of being subjected to his tender ministrations in this remote district. He voted himself a very pleasant fellow, and a right merry boon companion: mixed his tumblers of punch scientifically and bravely; and at length, after a great deal of persuasion, succeeded in inducing a revenue officer to send for a bottle of the *raal cratur* from a late seizure.

We were now most heartily tired of our

company ; but, after vainly endeavouring to *hint* them away, were constrained to retire to our respective couches, leaving our companion in full possession of the field. He had not the slightest idea of retiring himself as long as a drop of the whisky remained, or he could see to mix a tumbler of punch. He consequently got very glorious and very uproarious, until at last the disturbance became so intolerable that the landlady, a very nice, respectable woman, came up in high indignation, and after a most animated and amusing colloquy, succeeded in packing him off to bed, and the following day turned him out of the house.

The next morning, early, we took a car to the Ballinahinch River, a forty minutes' drive. The day was not particularly favourable for our sport ; the wind was from a bad quarter, and often failed us entirely ; besides which, there was a constant drizzling rain, with every appearance of more over-head. I tried several points of the river unsuccessfully, till at length I came to my favourite little pool, where I had

killed the salmon two days before. Here I rose seven or eight fish; killed three; and played almost to the death a fourth; and all this in less than five square yards of water.

The two largest weighed exactly eight pounds apiece, the smallest five pounds. I afterwards took a boat, and fished from a small island lower down, where I rose a few fish, and killed one salmon of between six and seven pounds. As usual, I found O'Shaughnessy's orange much the most successful fly; although, by Larry's recommendation, I tried several others.

The tide coming in, sent us home in good time to our dinner, which this evening we had to ourselves.

The following day we were engaged to meet some friends at Invermore, distant about twenty-five miles by water, and had hired a tight little sailing boat for the voyage. Understanding, however, that the afternoon would be the most propitious time for our starting, I determined to give the river a farewell trial in

the early morning, and accordingly drove over to the fishery, which I reached about eight o'clock, just as the water was clearing from the effects of the tide. The salmon were jumping in every part of the pool, and I expected to commit great devastation among them, although, as before, the weather was far from favourable.

To my surprise, however, for a long time not a fish would rise at my flies ; or, if he did just look at them, he showed not the least disposition to take them. At last, when my patience was nearly exhausted, I succeeded in hooking and killing a couple of salmon, of six and seven pounds respectively, with a small white-trout fly, of Kelly's ; and, it being then near twelve o'clock, was reluctantly compelled to bid adieu to this river, where more or less sport may always be had, from the immense number of fish it contains, but which *might* be rendered the most splendid stream for angling that I ever saw, were only the weirs removed higher up.

Upon reaching Roundstone I learned that a bridal party from the very same neighbourhood to which we were going, who had that morning trudged it over the mountains and bogs, to obtain the priest's nuptial benediction, were naturally anxious to avail themselves of our boat for the return. As the vessel was a smart little craft, and roomy enough for us all, we were very happy to have it in our power to save them a wearisome march of seven or eight hours. Accordingly, about three o'clock, we all embarked, eleven in number, with the tide in our favour, a smart breeze in the best quarter, and every appearance of fine weather : appearances which for once were not deceitful.

I must not, however, quit Roundstone without saying two or three words respecting the place itself. The ground on which it is built was taken for a long term, from Mr. Martin, by the late Mr. Nimmo, on a speculation, and has now come to his brother, who has a small, but neat house, close to the pier. Mr. Nim-

mo entertained a high idea of its advantages and capabilities ; but it is as yet only a small village, and does not appear to be at all increasing at present. Clifden seems certainly to have got the start of it.

I believe Mr. Nimmo's idea was that it would prove a valuable station for our ships in time of war, which very probably may turn out to be the case. The harbour is remarkably commodious and safe ; there is excellent anchorage and sufficient depth of water for the largest vessels, at any time of the tide, close up to the little pier.

Independently of these nautical advantages, it also possesses much picturesque beauty, which we saw to great advantage from the water. The white cottages of Roundstone, clustering round the base of the hill of the same name, the broken rocky shores that on all sides encircle the Bay, the gigantic arms that it extends deep into the land, the fishing boats idly rocking in the little port, with the many others skimming across the blue waters in every

direction, and, beyond and above all, the lofty chain of the Twelve Pins, piercing far into the azure vault of heaven, unstained by a single cloud — these several objects of beauty alternately engaged my eye and charmed my mind, as our tiny frigate rapidly shot across the bosom of this fine harbour.

We soon came to its mouth, which is somewhat encumbered by several rocks and islands ; on one of which Mr. Martin has established a deer park. We then entered the open Bay of Galway, directly up which we ran, with a brisk westerly wind behind us.

The shore we coasted is rocky and dangerous ; but in general too low to be picturesque. After sailing six or eight miles along it, we suddenly turned directly northwards into the extensive Bay of Kilkerran, which is only divided from Great Man's Bay by Lettermore and other large islands.

At the head of this fine Bay lay our desired haven ; and we were not at all sorry to see its shores rapidly rise more and more palpably

before us. We had occasionally very violent squalls from the high land under which we were sailing; and more than once found ourselves among shoals, where the local knowledge of our bridal friends proved of great service. At length, however, we jumped on shore, without the least accident, after a most agreeable and successful voyage, having performed the twenty-five miles within three hours and a half.

At the point of debarkation we easily got half a dozen stout young fellows to "hand up" our luggage across the hill, to Mr. O'Hara's Lodge, about a mile distant. Our curiosity and our appetites equally spurred us on; and it was not long before we reached the shores of the small lake, in the centre of which the blue roof and smoking chimneys of our intended host's elegant cottage peeped forth most invitingly from out the green covert of its little island. We needed not Fitz James's bugle, to evoke the light shallop that swiftly pushed out to meet us; not guided by the fairy hand of

any Lady of the Lake, but urged by the vigorous strokes of a sturdy Milesian.

Upon landing at our islet home, we were much disappointed to find that our host had not yet arrived. He was to come from Galway that day; and, as the wind that had been so favourable to us was exactly in his teeth, we justly feared that his voyage must be both long and unpleasant.

In momentary expectation of his arrival, we beguiled the impatience of hunger by examining our new quarters, and making what preparations we could for the reception of our friends. However, we were soon given to understand that we *must* dine immediately, in order to profit by the little daylight left; for all the candles, with most of the eatables and drinkables, and other etceteras necessary for a sporting campaign, were on board with our host. Very readily taking the hint, we sat down with wondrous appetites, but were soon surprised by the deep shades of night, when we were obliged to make up for the absence of the sun

by blazing bog-deal, and by a scientific arrangement of the peats. The substitutes we were forced to devise for this and many other deficiencies were very amusing; and the only thing that clouded our hilarity was the uncertainty in which we were about our host. He did not arrive until between one and two o'clock; and, as he had brought a strong party with him, to whom the sea air had given undeniable appetites, the whole household was quickly roused to give the new comers as expeditious and abundant a supper as possible.

We were all highly delighted at being thus safely collected from our different points, and anticipated at least a few days' most agreeable *séjour*, even if the very great sport which all the waterguards concurred in promising should fail us. In neither expectation were we at all disappointed.

CHAPTER XI.

A Fishing Lodge in Cunnemarra — White Trout and Salmon
— Details of Sport — Scenery — Flies — General Remarks
on Fly Fishing — Break-up of Party.

THE day after our arrival being the sabbath, fishing was, of course, out of the question ; therefore, after joining in prayers at home, we strolled about our little island, and in the afternoon walked over to a neighbouring lake, the intended scene of our next day's amusement.

Mr. O'Hara's object in building on an island was to keep off the numbers of hangers-on by whom one is sure to be pestered on a sporting expedition in Ireland. Even during my short sojourn here, I saw ample reason to approve

his judgment, in putting a couple of hundred yards of water between him and these annoyances. Every day might be seen twenty or thirty fellows couching on the opposite bank, in watch for an opportunity of slipping into the island; who would all infallibly have domiciliated themselves on the premises during the whole of our stay, had it not been for our insular position, and the strict orders that no one should on any account be ferried across without express permission.

Nor should I omit to mention another great advantage, afforded by the privacy of the place and the contiguity of water, of which we availed ourselves every morning. Upon jumping out of bed, we had nothing to do but slip on a dressing gown, and in a few seconds we were plunging in the lake, where a short swim refreshed us most deliciously after the fatigues of the previous day.

The islet rock on which this Lodge stands is small, but very pretty, and covered with trees and shrubs, chiefly evergreens. The house

itself is not yet quite finished, but is remarkably neat in its elevation, and commodious within ; in short, exactly suited to the purpose for which it was built. Its great disadvantage is that it is so far from the fishing-ground, if I may be allowed the expression. There is, I believe, what in England would be considered excellent fishing in the very lake that surrounds it ; but infinitely the best lakes are situated at a mile and a half and three miles' distance, on either side. This walk is equally annoying, whether when going, with the impatience of anticipated sport, or when returning, worn out by a long day's fag. And walk it you must, for the country around is so very soft and boggy that riding is impracticable.

Of this we had sufficient proof, in walking over to the nearest of the lakes, Lough Luggen. It is about a mile in length, and, on an average, the third of a mile in breadth. Three or four small brooks feed it, and a tolerable stream conveys its waters by a tortuous course of a couple of miles into Kilkerran Bay. There

are sluices on all the rivulets, to prevent the fish from passing beyond the lake until close time, when they require to be very strictly watched against poachers.

Mr. O'Hara rents these fisheries, together with the right of sporting over the adjoining mountains, from Mr. Martin, whose family have a grant from the Crown of, I believe, all the fisheries west of Galway. He employs twelve or fourteen of the best conducted young men that reside near the different streams and lakes, to guard them against all kinds of poaching: and I certainly think that they perform their duty honestly. From Lough Luggen we walked down the side of the river, where we saw plenty of white trout and a few salmon jump, and thence returned home, with increased courage and hopes for the morrow.

During the night it rained hard; and the next morning the wind was so very violent that the men had the greatest difficulty to get the boats up to the scene of action on Lough Luggen. We consequently did not commence

operations until about twelve o'clock, and even then the wind was so high that we were obliged to fish all the early part of the day from the banks. I also lost much time in lingering at inferior spots. Nevertheless, I was quite astonished at the extraordinary number of fish I every where rose. They were all white trout, varying in weight from half a pound to one pound and a half. I did not see any very large ones move, nor a single salmon, although both are undoubtedly in the lake, and occasionally take the fly well, particularly in September. But, of these small white trout, I am confident that in less than six hours I rose nearer *two* thousand than one thousand! I must have *hooked* two or three hundred at the very least, and actually *basketed* seventy-six, which weighed between fifty and sixty pounds. I declare I became quite tired of pulling them out.

Fishing, as I usually do, with only two flies, I frequently caught two at a time; and once killed four fish in two positively consecutive

throws, without any intermediate cast. I have no doubt whatever that, on a really favourable day, and by beginning early, I could kill in this lake three hundred white trout, which should weigh little short of two hundred pounds.

A Cockney, accustomed only to flog the Lea, or the Wandle, may think this ridiculous exaggeration ; but I now know it to be true, though perhaps I should scarcely have believed it myself a year or two ago. For numbers, I never saw any lake or stream at all equal to Lough Luggen ; and, later in the season, I was assured much larger fish may be killed.

I had been told that the white trout here would take nothing but a black, rough-headed fly, with crow's or starling's wings. I had laughed at this idea, as they in general prefer a very gaudy fly ; but I think that, upon the whole, the flies which proved the most successful were a dark green, or blue, or black-bodied fly, with silver twist and guinea-fowl wing, as the *stretcher*, and a bright claret-bodied fly,

with mixed and very showy wings, as the dropper. But they took almost anything.

We all collected round the hospitable board to a late but most joyous dinner ; and, as usual on expeditions of this description, each had his little contribution to add to the general comfort or amusement ; his little arrangement in the culinary or butler's department ; his adventures of the day to relate : so that the evening glided by imperceptibly, until the watches (and they alone) told us that Morning had pushed Night off her throne.

The next day, leaving the others to continue the attack on Lough Luggen, one of the party and myself preferred trying our luck on Lough Screeb, where we understood there were fewer trout but more salmon. The distance is three miles of indifferent mountain walking. The Lough we were recommended to fish is the second from the sea of a chain of lakes, formed by a considerable stream that comes down from the mountains near Flinn's. It is nearly circular in shape and about three miles in cir-

cumference. We found there, expecting us, a couple of stout, well-meaning mountaineers, with a huge and most unmanageable boat. They unfortunately knew nothing about the best parts of the lake for angling ; and indeed the wind was so high that we could do little else than drift before it towards what seemed the most likely spots.

I used large flies, fishing entirely for salmon, of which I did not see one ; but rose many white trout, apparently of considerable size : and killed six good fish, one of them exceeding three pounds. At length we drifted into a little bay, where the stream enters that feeds the lake, and which we had been told was the most favourite pool for salmon. It was also more sheltered from the wind ; and we were, therefore, better able to manage our unwieldy barge. I here rose several salmon, and killed two of nine pounds and six and a half pounds respectively. They were both very dark-looking and poor fish, which had evidently been a long time in the fresh water : the first,

especially, if fresh run from the sea, ought to have weighed fifteen or sixteen pounds.

After giving this pool a good trial, we left it to get quiet, and walked up the stream, which contains several good pools, full, as I was assured, of salmon : but unfortunately so sheltered that the wind, which blew a hurricane on the lake, did not touch them in the least. The highest and best pool, however, had a little curl upon it ; and here my companion hooked, but did not kill, two small salmon. Immediately above this are the sluices, which obstruct the fish from ascending into the upper lakes. A short distance below is a considerable cascade, that rolls and tumbles over a vast rounded mass of granite, in a manner not unlike (though of course upon an infinitely smaller scale,) the famous waterfall in the Valley of Formazza, in the Canton Ticino.

The scenery around is also striking, from its peculiarly wild character. Here is nothing to tell of Man, his works, or his cultivation. All is Nature : and if she does not here assume her

sublimest or most romantic garb, she at least appears with those stern and primitive features which are always so interesting to the eye, familiar with the artificial charms of civilized life. In the distance, towards Flinn's and Maam, were fine ranges of lofty blue mountains : while the foreground was occupied with rocks, and hills, and bogs, which bore no more trace of the hand of cultivation than if Man had never existed. While gazing at this impressive scene, a very large black eagle came sailing over our heads, with the motionless wing that distinguishes this majestic bird among the feathered creation, and pursued his silent course to the distant quarry, perfectly regardless of the menacing gestures and voices intended to frighten him. Nothing could be more in unison with the landscape or with my meditations.

Having now given our favourite Bay the advantage of two or three hours' rest, and ourselves the *ditto* of a good luncheon, I proceeded to attack it again. I this time

rose four salmon, two of which I succeeded in hooking well : both showed me great sport.

The first was evidently a very large fish : judging from his strength, activity, and mode of playing, we all imagined him to be not less than twenty pounds in weight : but, as he never showed himself from first to last, I cannot speak positively of his size. The instant he was hooked, he ran out forty or fifty yards of line as fast as the wheel could spin ; then turned as rapidly, and, passing the boat, made off for the main lake with a velocity that I think I never saw equalled by any fish.

At the entrance to this little bay was a ledge of rocks, which I tried all in my power to avoid ; but, having only a single gut casting-line, and, being unable to shift my position in the boat, he proved too strong for me to turn him. With the obstinate determination of instinct, he made for this place of safety, darted quick round it, and in a few seconds cut my line against the sharp angles of the rock, carrying

off several yards of line and gut. So much for number one.

The other was a salmon of about ten pounds, of a silvery whiteness, and therefore quite fresh from the sea. He at first played a very different game from the other. Instantly that he felt the steel, he bounded again and again out of the water, throwing himself forward on his side, in the way salmon usually do, when first they taste the delights of fresh water. He sought safety in every corner of the pool; but, finding it not there, at length rushed directly for the same ledge of rocks where I had lost the former. When he was within a yard of this dreaded Scylla, I saw it was high time to come to a trial which was the strongest; and accordingly would give him no more line. After a momentary struggle, however, he broke my new casting line, and then rushed delightedly into the free waters for which he had fought so hard.

Talk to me of philosophy!—these are the emergencies that really try a man's temper.

Nevertheless, it is, perhaps, these very occasional mishaps that add such zest to the salmon-fisher's success at other times : and I very much believe it was my long continued good fortune that lost me these two fish, by having made me somewhat careless about the quality and strength of my tackle. I had no other sport worth mentioning, except that I rose three or four very large *brown* trout, not one of which, to my great annoyance, was I fortunate enough to kill.

Upon returning to the Lodge, I learned that the others had enjoyed very good sport on Lough Luggen, although not quite equal to that of the previous day : and we all again passed a most agreeable evening together.

The next day, being still for large fish in preference to numbers, I persuaded one of the party to accompany me again to Lough Screeb. The wind continued to blow from the same unfavourable quarter, the north ; but, being more moderate, we were better able to manage our boat : and therefore, with our improved know-

ledge of the topography of the lake, naturally anticipated much diversion.

How often must I make the same remark upon the "glorious uncertainty of the Gentle Art!" Although we carefully fished all the best haunts, I could not move a single salmon! and even in my own favourite bay only rose one, which, however, I did not hook. I killed a few fine white trout; the three largest of which weighed three and a half, three, and two pounds each: besides losing several others of at least equal size.

The wind gradually died away; and, before we left the lake, it became so perfectly calm as to make it totally useless to fish any longer. It being our last day, this was a sad disappointment, not only to us but to our boatmen, who seemed very anxious that I should have good sport; and who declared, on parting, that when I next came they would row me for nothing, and bring me a bottle of whisky into the bargain! This good-will of theirs I owed chiefly, I know, to the kindness universally

felt by the unsophisticated Irishman towards a stranger who has come some distance to visit his country : but, in some measure, also, perhaps, to my having supplied them with sundry yards of the best pigtail tobacco, a scarce luxury in these parts ; and what a sportsman, who wishes to be on good terms with his attendants, should never be without.

Before concluding my account of Lough Screeb, I may observe that the flies recommended by the natives were generally of very sober colours, such as olive mohair, or a mixture of brown, yellow, and purple ; with a dark mallard, or grouse, or turkey wing. But, as usual, I found O'Shaughnessy's to beat them all : though I think that, upon this occasion, his purple or black-bodied flies were more killing than the orange.

No angler who has been led by his Gentle Art to various streams and countries can have failed to remark that in each he has found different and distinct flies recommended as the only ones that have any chance of killing fish

there. At almost every river that I have fished, I have been shown by the "Magnus Apollo" of the place the standard flies, which he and his father before him have ever used; and which alone, he is persuaded, can tempt "the scaly shoals to nibble the fallacious bait."

It is most amusing to watch the sly expression of mingled humour and pity with which he will turn over your well-assorted book of beauteous imitations, erewhile the pride of Kelly's, or Murray's, or O'Shaughnessy's shop.

"Och! sure, them's all mighty pretty flies *to look at!*—but your honour'll never *catch a fish* with them in this river anyhow."

And then, producing from his nether pocket an antique tin box, or still more venerable book, he will *sometimes* exhibit a really well-tied fly, but much oftener an extraordinary conglomeration of wool and feathers, which may well excite the curiosity of the fish to know what it can possibly be meant to imitate. This curious "watery snare" he will knowingly hold up to

the light, half shutting his eyes, and then cautiously place the precious treasure in your hands.

“ Your honour will laugh at *my* flies ! they are not *quite* so handsome as yours, may be : but, if your honour will only give them a bit of a trial, I’ll be bound they’ll kill more fish than all the flies that ever were tied in Dublin !”

Whatever might be my opinion of their merits, I invariably made it a rule to give the flies of the country a fair trial : but I have very seldom, if ever, found them to be by any means so successful as a judicious selection from the shops above-mentioned.

The fact is, that these local fishermen, having been accustomed from their youth to the streams and lakes of their immediate neighbourhood, are perfectly acquainted with the haunts and habits of the fish that frequent them ; and they therefore waste no time at unlikely spots, or in unfavourable weather. They are, moreover, from long practice, generally skilful in the nice conduct of their rod and

line : and therefore very naturally kill more fish than the stranger, who is totally ignorant of the river and less adroit in the management of his tackle. But this success, which they chiefly owe to their superior skill and local knowledge, they attribute to the cunning device and fashion of their flies.

It is impossible wholly to deny that the genus salmo seem, from some cause or other, to affect particular colours in different streams : and I have found it useful, in choosing from my stores the flies to be used on a new river, to be guided by the colour recommended by the fishermen of the place, as well as by the size and complexion of the water, the state of the weather, &c. Paying due regard to these circumstances, I have sometimes preferred a gay fly, at other times one of more sober hues : but I have almost invariably found that a fly selected with proper attention to the above data from my Limerick collection was more successful than any of the vaunted deceptions of the natives.

The great thing is that the colours should be well blended, the body and wings well proportioned, so that the hook swim evenly ; and that the whole should exhibit as lively and showy an appearance as the weather and water will admit. But, above all, it is indispensable to success that the fur-wrought deceit should be played enticingly, with a tremulous but equable movement, that can only be acquired by experience.

It will be observed that I am here only speaking of salmon. It is a totally different case with the brown trout, which never leave their native stream or lake, and feed all the year upon such insects as these haunts produce. Yet, even with the river-trout, I have usually had the best sport with a red and a blue palmer, which are comparatively seldom seen on the water. And, indeed, if there be an abundance of natural flies, at which the trout may be greedily rising, my experience has taught me that seldom will the angler have any great success in the most delicate imitations of the

same ; the fish easily detecting the cheat when they have the opportunity of comparing it with a number of the real insects. On such occasions it is usually more profitable to try a totally dissimilar fly from that on the water, but of the standard colours and sort ordinarily successful in that neighbourhood. In confirmation of which, I may observe that, in the celebrated Lakes of Westmeath, though by far the best sport is obtained there during the season when they are covered with clouds of the May fly, which the trout are seen every where eagerly swallowing ; yet the fishermen seldom catch them with an imitation of that beautiful ephemera, but generally with a brown, or olive, or claret-coloured fly.

With regard to salmon, however, as they feed very sparingly, if at all, in fresh water, it is scarcely to be imagined that they seize the artificial fly from any fancied resemblance to their favourite food. This is a question upon which even scientific anglers are very little agreed : but I believe that at least the

their rising at it from its similarity to the libellula, or dragon-fly, is deservedly exploded. If they really do take it for an article of food, I conceive Sir Humphrey Davy's hypothesis to be the most probable; namely, that it must be either from some vague recollection of the flies that formed their chief sustenance as samlets; or else from a more recent remembrance of the bright-scaled fry, which probably constitute their food in the depths of ocean.

It is my firm opinion, however, that, as no food has ever been found in their stomachs, they do not feed in fresh water; and that they do not seize the artificial fly with the intention of swallowing it. I humbly conceive that they do so from a motive of curiosity. They observe a glittering object of seductive hues, moving in an extraordinary manner before them, and they are curious to ascertain what it is. Having no other means of doing so, they apply to it the test of the only organ whereby they can ascertain nature; and would, doubtless, after

satisfying their curiosity, reject it if the barbed hook permitted them.

If this theory be at all correct, it may, perhaps, in some measure serve to explain why it is practically found expedient *not* to imitate the flies which the salmon may have loved in their *infantine* state, nor yet the fish on which they have fattened in the sea; but rather to blend rich colours, gaudy tinsel, and the handsomest feathers that can be procured, so as to produce an object most certainly unlike any thing eatable, but well calculated to catch the eye and excite the *curiosity* of the newly-arrived stranger.

The happiness of invention with which these gorgeous deceits are often devised, and the neatness with which they are executed, have ever greatly won my admiration. Indeed, the art of tying flies well requires the rarest combination of judgment, fancy, and manual skill, of any thing connected with my favourite sport: and which I may praise the more as I possess it but in the very lowest degree.

How well has it been described by Gay !

" To frame the little animal, provide
 All the gay hues that wait on female pride ;
 Let Nature guide thee ; sometimes golden wire
 The shining bellies of the fly require :
 The peacock's plume thy tackle must not fail,
 Nor the dear purchase of the sable's tail.
 Each gaudy bird some slender tribute brings,
 And lends the growing insect proper wings :
 Silks of all colours must their aid impart,
 And every fur promote the fisher's art.
 So the gay lady, with expensive care,
 Borrows the pride of land, of sea, and air ;
 Furs, pearls, and plumes, the glittering thing displays,
 Dazzles our eyes, and easy hearts betrays."

I am much surprised that, among the number of Englishmen in the present day devoted to the fascinating pursuit of angling, there should have been so few who seem to have made a piscatory tour in Ireland. We hear of men going into Norway, or Sweden, or even wilder and remoter countries, for the sake of enjoying some good fishing, and yet I hardly heard of a single Saxon making a tour in Ireland for that express purpose. Those of my countrymen whom I heard spoken of as having preceded me, if not otherwise connected with

Ireland, were almost universally military men, quartered in the country.

Now, when I recollect the enthusiasm felt by so many disciples of Izaak Walton, and the trouble and expense they will incur to obtain very inferior angling, I know not how to account for this neglect of a very favourable district for their sport, so much more easily within their reach.

As for those whose useful avocations will not permit them to be absent more than a few days at a time, they must content themselves at most with a short ramble through Wales, where, in addition to beautiful scenery and an interesting race of people, they will find good brown trout fishing, with a variety of water, and freedom from interruption, which, to my taste, so much enhances the pleasure of even inferior sport; but they must expect no good salmon fishing in the Principality.*

* Upon this subject I justly fear to touch, as a most interesting and complete account of the piscatory capabilities of the Principality has just appeared from the pen of Captain Medwin. His book is entitled "THE ANGLER IN WALES."

There is, doubtless, good angling for both trout and salmon to be had in Scotland. I have been there several times, and have penetrated to its northernmost extremities, even to Cape Wrath and John O'Groat's ; and, from my personal experience, am convinced that the fly-fishing in that country is decidedly inferior to what may be had in Ireland ; and, except under peculiar circumstances, much more difficult to be obtained.

The Scotch understand the methods of catching salmon but too well ; and every river is pestered with nets and weirs, that prevent the fish from ascending, except in very high floods. Not a few streams are preserved by proprietors or lessees on purpose for the angling : and on these it is difficult to obtain permission, unless you happen to be personally acquainted with the owner.

In all these respects the advantage is greatly in favour of Ireland. The Irish, though infinitely better salmon-fishers with rod and line, do not by any means understand the mystery

of nets and boxes so well as the Scotch. And, in the many smaller rivers, which are protected by proprietors for the amusement of themselves and friends, I have never experienced any difficulty in obtaining liberty to angle, upon making a proper application.

But, even if as good salmon-fishing may be had at certain times, and at certain spots, in Scotland as in Ireland, and if its lake trout may be allowed to afford as good sport, there is, at any rate, no comparison between the two countries in respect to the white trout fishing.

White, or sea trout, are certainly found in most of the Scotch rivers; but neither in the number nor size of that most sporting fish, nor yet, in their readiness to take the fly, have I seen any stream of Scotland at all to be compared with the rivers and particularly the loughs of Ireland.

It is, no doubt, one great piscatory advantage connected with Green Erin, that it possesses (especially in the West) such a vast number of lakes immediately adjoining the coast. There

are thousands of such lakes along the western coast, within a couple of miles of the sea. The consequence is, that, if this short course be protected; salmon and white trout run up with every flood into the lake, where they may revel in safety ; whereas, in all small streams, the fish that had been tempted by a flood to ascend them are left exposed to the depredations of every poacher so soon as the succeeding drought has dried up the water.

I know not how my brother anglers may feel on such subjects, but I confess that this infinite variety of streams and lakes constitutes to me the great charm of an angling excursion. Doubtless, if my sole object were to produce an imposing catalogue of size and number, I should go to the best river or lake of which I could hear, and there flog away, until I had made myself thoroughly master of the local haunts and habits of the fish, the flies they most affected, &c. But, as my object has ever been to procure enjoyment, not to record slaughter, I prefer infinitely to wander at freedom through

a wide range of country, and, as soon as I have imbued my memory with the picturesque beauties of one spot, and formed a judgment of its piscatorial capabilities, I would hasten to cull the same delights in the next district —

“ To-morrow to fresh *lakes* and *streamlets* new.”

And, whatever the creel may tell — be it full of broad-finned monsters, or contain but a few “gubbahaws” — will not the heart bear witness at the close of such days that they have been days of real enjoyment? to be noted in the treasure-house of Memory with whitest stone?

For me, at least, such a style of fishing has incomparably greater attractions than, by softly stealing behind a bush and dropping a May fly into his unsuspecting mouth, to drag out some overgrown monster of a trout, in a stream where each fish is individually known, and watched as carefully as the sheep, and fed perhaps as regularly as the pigs!

As for the distance, the number of miles is comparatively no object to any one who has

a few weeks to spare, now that modern science has so nearly realized the lover's prayer, "to annihilate both time and space," that His Majesty's mail will convey you in four or five days to the "Ultima Thule" of Scotland or Ireland, to Thurso, or West Port.

With regard to the most favourable districts in Ireland for angling, I have endeavoured in the course of this little work to give the fullest information in my power of those parts which came under my observation. But, I may remark generally, that the whole of the western coast affords more or less excellent fishing, and that the whole of the eastern coast is as unfavourable for sport. There are exceptions on both coasts; but this is their general character.

In addition to the streams and lakes I have recorded in Connaught and Munster, I have every reason to believe that splendid salmon-fishing is to be had in Donegal; I know that there is good angling in the Bush River, close to the magnificent Giants' Causeway, having

killed several salmon there myself, in the first week of March ; and I have been assured that there is capital trout-fishing to be had in Lough Neagh and its tributary streams, in which are also found some varieties of trout peculiar, I believe, to this district. And, lastly, the lakes of Westmeath are justly celebrated for the size and excellence of their brown trout : the best time for visiting them is from about the 25th of May to the 10th of June.

To complete my hints, for the benefit of any Saxon anglers who may be induced to take a ramble through this interesting country, I will add, that excellent tackle of all sorts may be got at Martin Kelly's, in Sackville Street, or at Murray's, Arran Quay, Dublin. At both these shops the angler will meet with very neat and killing flies, of which he should lay in a stock. But to these I should strongly recommend his adding a selection from O'Shaughnessy's, or Glover's, at Limerick, which, though not so neat-looking, I generally experienced to be more murderous than the Dublin flies.

With regard to rods, I decidedly prefer the Irish to those made in London, except only as to the tops, which, in my opinion, are usually made of too brittle wood in Ireland. They are much more elastic than the English rods, and consequently throw a long line better. The perfection of a salmon rod (for it matters little where or how a single-handed rod for whipping out minnows be made) in my poor judgment, is a twenty feet rod, made in four pieces, by Kelly, or Murray, with a top joint manufactured by Ustonson, or Chevalier. But, wherever it be bought, let the angler remember that the but must be solid, and the top spliced. No two-handed rod, in fact, ought ever to have a hollow but, or its top joint fixed with a brass ferule. Besides, the impossibility of throwing the fly to an equal distance, and with the same exactness, every fisherman knows that, in casting a length of heavy salmon line in a high wind, the hollow but is sure to split, and the top to break off close to the pipe. This is so certain a result, that I felt much surprise in

reading some of Christopher North's admirable papers,* (wherein the skilful, practical angler is almost as conspicuous as the high-souled and eloquent portrayer of Nature and Nature's best feelings) to find him enumerate among the miseries of angling, to "break your top joint, and have to sit down and pick out the rotten wood from the *brass ferule*, with the fish rising on all sides of you!" — As if such a thing could occur a *second* time, at any rate, to any true fisherman, such as the distinguished professor of the art who masks behind the *sobriquet* of Christopher North is well-known to be.

But, as my reader will by this time have seen, when I get upon my Waltonian Hobby, he is apt to run away with me, so I must try to pull him in, and keep a tighter curb on him for the future. I only wish that the Johnny Gilpin sort of excursion I have just made on paper may prove useful to my brethren of the angle.

To return, therefore, to the pleasant party

assembled round the hospitable board at Invermore.

Our dinner party this evening was not less joyous than the former, although it was the last ! It is a grievous thing when a sporting party, who have been roughing it for any length of time together, start east and west, north and south, little knowing whether they may ever all meet again ! We had been together only for a few days : but we had spent them much too pleasantly to admit of our separating without great and general regret.

However, the next day commenced the assembles in Galway, at which some of our party were obliged to be present : so we could not linger longer. We, therefore, gave the hand of good fellowship and friendship, with hearty wishes for our mutual welfare until the next meeting ; and then set out on our different routes.

CHAPTER XII.

Departure from Cunnemarra — Maam Lodge — Lough Corrib
— Interval of Repose — Distressing Case of Cholera — An-
other Scene at Galway — Return to Limerick — Com-
mercial Transactions in Ireland.

THE others of our party returned by sea to Galway: but my good young friend and I rowed to the northern end of the lake, intending to go to Maam, where we knew a boat was waiting to convey us down Lough Corrib. From this end of the lake is a bridle path leading into the main road between Flinn's and Oughterard: and here we had expected to find a horse to convey our baggage; but to our dismay neither horse nor guide were to be seen!

After waiting some time for their appearance, my companion walked on to try if he could see any thing of them, while I remained to guard the effects. The boy did not arrive with his pony until eleven o'clock : and, though he gave me a most eloquent and voluble exposition of the causes of his delay, I was no wiser for his explanation, it being couched in the purest Erse, the only language he knew. I believe, however, that the delay arose from his not having been able to catch his cunning beast in the mountains.

The distance from Lough Inver to the main road cannot be more than four miles ; but, what with the difficulties of fixing the baggage, and the indifference of the road, it took us more than two hours to accomplish it. About half a mile from Flinn's, or the Halfway House, I found a car from Maam waiting for me on the banks of a large and fine lake, and just opposite a beautifully wooded island. From this point to Maam is about six miles, of rather hilly but good road ; passing through some

noble mountain scenery, which an unpleasant misty rain prevented my seeing to the greatest advantage. Still I saw enough to convince me that it must be of a wild and grand character.

There are many lakes scattered along the road, in several of which I was told are an abundance of brown trout; but, as they are very little known, and, as there is no boat on any, they are scarcely ever fished. Most of them contain numerous small islands, invariably covered with trees and shrubs, which they owe to their superior driness and protection from cattle. Cunnemarra in general is utterly and entirely denuded of trees; but these islets, as well as the plantations at Ballinahinch and Clifden, prove that at least it is not the fault of the climate.

Upon descending into the plain in which lies Maam Lodge, its position struck me most forcibly, situated as it is at the head of an arm of Lough Corrib, at the commencement of the famous pass into Cunnemarra, over Maam

Turk, and at the very foot of a high and steep mountain. It is surrounded by mountains, which appeared the more lofty and imposing, perhaps, from being wreathed in eddying mists, which only occasionally allowed their peaked summits and dark frowning masses to be seen.

Maam Lodge was originally built by Mr. Nimmo, for his own residence, but has now been converted into a very commodious and comfortable mountain inn, which appears well kept. Here I found my companion already arrived, and Mr. St. George's beautiful six-oared boat in readiness for us.

Having no time to lose, we hastily changed our wet things, ate a most acceptable dinner, and, about three o'clock, embarked with every prospect of a rainy, disagreeable voyage, and a strong pull against a stiff breeze. Scarcely, however, had we got on-board, when the mists began gradually to clear away, and the wind to veer towards the N.W., the very best that we could have. Therefore, after pulling for the

first two or three miles, which our men did uncommonly well, upon emerging into the open expanse of Lough Corrib, we put up our lug sail, and without a single stroke of the oar ran down to Annakeen, a course of nearly thirty miles, in less than three hours.

This lake is justly considered very dangerous for sailing; and many are the fatal accidents that have occurred on it, from the sudden squalls that come down from the mountains. We had, however, careful and experienced boatmen, with whom we incurred no danger. Our boat was a handsome, London-built six-oar, the men all in Mr. St. George's livery, and evidently accustomed to a degree of order, neatness, and subordination, which is not *always* to be seen in Ireland.

The whole appointments and appearance did great credit to the owner's taste; and very much obliged we felt to him for his kindness in offering us such a delightful mode of concluding our trip to Cunnemarra.

The north-western branch of Lough Corrib,

at the end of which Maam Lodge is situated, is entirely shut out from the wider part of the real lake by magnificent mountains, which rise in lofty precipices from the very water. This is much the finest part; and, for picturesque grandeur, is equal to almost any part of any Irish or British lake.

“ Nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure Lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer the mountains sink,
At once, upon the level brink.”

The rocky shores that engirdle these dark waters are frequently well-timbered, especially the beautiful Hill of Doon, as picturesque a mount as any *Lake, Loch, or Lough*, can boast.

Nearly opposite to it we passed close under a very high and steep rock, where we had been told an extremely large otter is often to be seen. He was at his favourite haunt, and dashed finely into the water as we approached, while at the same time a dark-winged cormorant rushed startled forth, from his resting place in the brushwood above. The appearance of these

wild denizens of Nature in such a landscape was extremely characteristic and effective.

The lake afterwards expands into a vast sheet of water, a mimic sea, which is noble from its dimensions, but the shores are by no means commensurably high for its great breadth. The surface is studded with islands : indeed, they are said to amount to exactly three hundred and sixty-five, and some are of sufficient extent to be inhabited. On the shores are many beautiful gentlemen's seats, as well as several villages, and even towns ; for such at least Oughterard, with its extensive barracks, may be considered.

Salmon are taken in Lough Corrib, as also some very large trout ; but the Lake, being infested with pike, no great sport can be expected ; and few are caught, except by cross fishing.

We landed at Annakeen, after a most successful voyage, and there jumped into a carriage, waiting to convey us to my friend's home, which we reached just in time to enjoy a second

dinner, at one of the pleasantest and most hospitable boards in Ireland. Many, of course, were the questions to be asked and answered on both sides; and we could not help recording our adventures, with the conscious importance of heroes who had achieved a perilous and gallant enterprize, in having dared to penetrate the unknown wilds of half-civilized Cunne-marra. It was, indeed, a feat of bravery to add a few inches to one's stature.

Having now had a pretty good spell of touring and fishing, I was not sorry to rest quietly for a few days, especially in such agreeable quarters as I well knew my present to be. I therefore resigned myself with Italian composure to the "*dolce far niente*," which many things conspired to render peculiarly acceptable. The weather was so intensely hot as to put travelling out of the question, while it made an evening stroll or ride uncommonly delightful.

It was also the time of the assizes at Galway, whence we had an almost daily importation

of guests, who, blending with a large party in the house, supplied a fund of information, amusement, and anecdote — a variety of character and conversation which lend such charms to the intercourse of civilized society: while over all music and singing, such as are seldom heard in private life, threw a fascination that will long make those evenings live in Memory's greenest spot.

This, however, could not last for ever; the summer was wearing apace, and I had yet much to see, particularly Erin's great boast, Killarney's Lakes. Therefore, on Monday, August 5th, I reluctantly bade my most excellent and kind friends adieu, and drove over to Galway, with a former worthy host of mine, at whose house we intended to pass that night, and the next morning to go for a few day's fishing again on the Costello.

Alas! how little can we poor mortals dive into futurity, or calculate on the morrow! Instead of attending a party of pleasure, it was decreed, by the Almighty Disposer of all things,

that he should be watching the death-bed of his wife, dying too by that most awful of all modern maladies, the Asiatic cholera.

No one could appear in higher health and spirits than this lady did the whole evening of our arrival, until we retired at an early hour to rest, with the intention of starting at day-break, for Costello. During the night, however, the cook was seized with symptoms, which rapidly assumed but too suspicious an appearance; and, about the very hour we had proposed setting out on our expedition, the lady of the house was attacked in such a manner, that, combining the two seizures together, we could not conceal from ourselves the probability, nay, the certainty, of their both proceeding from the much dreaded cholera.

My hostess was attended by her usual medical adviser within a very few minutes from the first attack, and in the course of two or three hours was visited by all the best doctors in Galway. From the first she never rallied, but went through all the different stages of

this dreadful malady, without expressing or affording a hope. By twelve o'clock she was in the state of collapse, and her dissolution momentarily expected. She lingered, however, until about seven o'clock in the evening, when she calmly expired.

Death is always a solemn and too often an awful sight. I have seen it under many forms ; but seldom, if ever, under more affecting circumstances than this. The youth and apparent health of the victim—the suddenness of the seizure—the contrast to the scene of amusement we had anticipated—the desolate wretchedness of the husband—and, above all, perhaps, the hapless ignorance of the children—conspired to form one of the most melancholy and heart-breaking spectacles I have ever witnessed. She left four children, the youngest quite an infant : and all of them of too tender an age to understand that they were about to suffer a loss that can never be replaced, the loss of an affectionate mother !

I was deeply affected by this scene of woe.

Perhaps, also, a sense of personal danger was more or less mixed up with my commiseration for this afflicted family. I could not help feeling that I was in the presence of the Angel of Death. Be this mysterious and almost invincible disease epidemic, or contagious, or infectious, I was aware that I was equally exposed to its communication: and I must own that I thought it very probable I should be attacked. I did not, however, give myself up to any unreasonable alarm or trepidation. I was supported by a sincere conviction of being in the hands of One whom I had ever experienced to be a most merciful Father: and I mentally and unreservedly resigned myself to His will, to do unto me whatsoever might seem to Him best. It is this conviction of the goodness as well as the power of God that I have ever found the only thing to be really depended on in the hour of actual danger; especially when that danger comes unexpected and unaccompanied by the necessity of personal exertion.

I will not dwell longer upon this most melancholy scene.

As long as I could give the slightest comfort or assistance, I of course remained. But, when hope was gone, and my presence was rather burdensome, I was obliged to seek fresh quarters for the night. This, however, was not so easily effected as might be imagined, in consequence of its being unfortunately the week of the races. My first wish was to leave Galway that evening: but I ascertained by personal inquiry, not only that all the coaches were filled beyond their number, but that positively not one single carriage or horse of any description could be had in the town for love or money.

I was thus necessitated to pass the night there: but where to get a bed? The inns were all crammed to suffocation; and it was only as a special favour that Mrs. Kilroy consented to let me have the last, and, of course, not the best, bed-room in her house. The accommodation allotted me was a small bed in a confined

closet, where light or air were seldom admitted. Into it I should think that half the bugs and all the fleas of Galway town had agreed that night to congregate : and their attacks gave me ample opportunity to ruminate upon the distressing events of the day.

Being worn out by the anxieties of the last twelve hours, and having to start before six the next morning, I retired early to rest — no, not to rest, but to bed. Independent of the animal annoyances to which I have before alluded, my room opened upon the passage, close to the only entrance : so that no one could come in or go out, without giving me the benefit of his stamping boots. There was also an ordinary, a race ball, and a hazard table, all within easy ear-shot of my room.

As soon as the sounds connected with “the feast of reason and the flow of soul” at the ordinary had somewhat subsided, the carriages began to set down their company close to my windows : and I soon after heard the notes of harmony proceeding from an ill-tuned orchestra,

eternally repeating the same airs to the accompaniment of forty or fifty pair of feet ; until, fond as I am of music, and above all of Irish music, I began to think one may almost have too much of it. I did not get a quarter of an hour's quiet sleep the whole night ; but lay tumbling and tossing in the most feverish and wretched state of body and mind. I really do think that the last twenty-four hours I spent in Galway were among the most miserable I ever experienced in the course of as happy a life as is accorded to most men : and the single fact of my having escaped the cholera on this occasion convinces me that it cannot be very infectious.

At length *that* day, which I thought never would come, broke, in the ignorant apprehension of others, perhaps, as early as on other mornings. It was with feelings of unmingled satisfaction that I found myself, with its first beams, rapidly leaving Galway behind me, in the Limerick mail. The above circumstances had compelled me to alter my plans : and

I therefore determined at once to return to Limerick, and to lose no time in proceeding thence to Killarney. I was sorry to be thus obliged to re-pass the road I had before traversed ; and which I therefore need not again describe. I arrived about four o'clock at Limerick, without the slightest adventure worth recording.

It was my intention to go by the steamboat down the Shannon : but, as it did not start till the following Saturday, I had a couple of days to recruit myself ; to make some purchases, among which a refit of flies was, perhaps, the most necessary ; and to complete my survey of the town and environs, with regard to which I found no reason to alter my previous opinion.

I must not, however, omit mentioning one circumstance that occurred to me here, as it is connected with a subject of no small interest to every tourist, viz., the mode of supplying his finances. I had been recommended in Dublin to take with me bank post bills, which, I was

assured, I should find no difficulty in changing at any of the provincial banks. However, both at Limerick and elsewhere, I experienced considerable difficulty and annoyance. Indeed, at one place, although I had come immediately from one very intimate friend of the manager, and was going to the house of another, I could not get a twenty pound note changed until I had brought a gentleman of my acquaintance, who quite accidentally happened to be in the town, to prove that I was myself.

It is not very pleasant to be kept for above half an hour, as I have been, kicking your heels at the banker's counter, with the character of a suspected swindler attached to you ; and to be subjected to the sort of cross-examination that takes place at the Old Bailey, before you can get your own money. But, infinitely beyond any personal annoyance, was I grieved with this specimen of the manner in which commercial transactions are embarrassed in this country. Nine-tenths of these transactions necessarily require more trust than was

at all demanded in my case : and, until more confidence be shown between man and man, it is impossible that Ireland should become a great commercial nation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Leave Limerick — Passage down the Shannon in a Steamboat — Interesting Labourers' Establishment in Clare — Poor Laws — Scenery of the Lower Shannon — Tarbert — Ballybunnion — Description of the Splendid Caves there.

ON Saturday, August 10th, I left Limerick by the steamboat, which, during the summer, goes three times a week down the Shannon, as far as Kilrush, a favourite bathing place, seated near the mouth of this fine river. The weather being most beautiful, the vessel was crowded with passengers; some intending merely to spend their Sunday in the country, but many to remain some time either at Kilrush or at Miltown Malbay. As may be supposed, in so large a company of warm-hearted and affable Irishmen I gleaned both amusement and information: In particular, I had a long and very

interesting conversation with a gentleman who lives near Newmarket in Clare, upon that subject of such momentous importance, not only to Ireland, but to the empire at large, the Poor Laws.

This gentleman has for the last two or three years been trying an experiment, of which I was sorry not to have previously heard; or I should much have liked to examine his establishment. His plan seems to be formed partly on that of Owen, and partly on that of the Dutch Colonies. He has drawn up a set of rules, to which each member signs his assent on entering the institution; and which if he breaks he is sure to be expelled at the end of the week.

The number of members is at present about eighty; including men, women, and children. They have six hundred acres given them to cultivate, at a rent of nine hundred pounds per annum. About half of it is good arable land; the rest pasture, bog, and mountain. They are paid the usual wages of the country;

that is, eight pence a day : not in actual money, but in "Labour Tickets," which descend to as low a fraction as a halfpenny : about fifty pounds suffices for the necessary circulation of the establishment. The accounts of profit and loss are made up weekly, and are open to the inspection of the members : and, in case there be any profit beyond the rental, at the end of the year, it is divided among the community.

Houses have been built for them on a regular plan. The single men and women sleep in separate large dormitories : the married people have each a room, twelve feet square, for which they pay six pence a week. They all take their meals together ; which saves a great deal of fuel, and waste, and time. No spirituous liquors, nor smoking, are allowed within the premises : neither may they keep pigs, which insures the tolerable cleanliness of their habitations. There is a store for the commonest articles in use ; but this, as well as some other parts of the plan, are not yet sufficiently deve-

loped. There is also an infant school, to which the children are sent at a year and a half old, and brought up apart from their parents.

When any new hands are required, Mr. V. selects the best he can hear of in the neighbourhood. These come for a week upon trial, are then balloted for by the old members, and either admitted or rejected. At first the plan was not popular among the labourers ; but, experience having convinced them of its advantages, there are now always more applications than vacancies.

Hitherto the scheme seems to have answered very well, both as a profitable and moral speculation : and its intelligent originator appears to imagine that its general adoption would supersede the necessity of Poor Laws. I must own, however, that, although it may answer on a small scale, and where there is an active and benevolent principal to direct its machinery, I cannot think it likely to succeed universally where that superintendence must often be wanting. Then this experiment affords, by

no means, a fair test of its applicability to the rest of Ireland. Being a new society, the great majority are strong, healthy young men; so that it contains not, by any means, its fair proportion of those rendered unprofitable or unproductive, by reason of youth, or sickness, or old age.

But what I certainly think the most objectionable part of the plan is, the removing all children, from their earliest years, out of the superintending care of their parents, which must necessarily destroy the bonds of filial and parental affection. In my opinion, the children should at least be with their parents every night and the greater part of Sunday.

To this observation Mr. V. objected, that all the good taught them during the day would be obliterated by the bad examples they would witness at night. But surely, if the parents be so greatly improved in their morals and habits, as he says has already been the case, there must at least be much less fear of contamination with them than in the homes of others in their sphere of life: and if the children them-

selves have further been fortified by the good lessons and habits acquired during the day at school, still less probable is it that they should be corrupted by the evil they may see at home ; but rather, by their gentle voices and examples, assist in completing the reformation of their parents.

But of this, at any rate, I am very confident that no fancied good can compensate for the loss of the natural love that should subsist between parent and child : and that no plan, whatever, based upon the destruction of this earliest and most hallowed affection of our nature, either ever can or ought to succeed. This part of the scheme at least must be altered.

The more I reflect, and the better I become informed upon the subject, the more deeply am I convinced that the speedy introduction of some system of Poor Laws into Ireland is demanded by natural justice and humanity, as well as by national policy. I should lay it down as a fundamental axiom, that, in every country which has reached the degree of civi-

lization we have, all classes, in return for their obedience to the laws, have a right to know that, *by law*, none who are willing to labour *can starve*, as long as there is a superfluity of food for the whole. This, I think, all the members of a civilized community have a right to expect.

But, the more I see of Ireland, the stronger is my conviction that this system of relief must not be a *parochial* one, as in England; but either national, or county, or, at least, baronial. There is not the machinery requisite for its efficient administration in half the parishes in Ireland: in very many of which, the persons who should carry it into effect would be occasionally requiring relief from the parish rates themselves, or would at least have near relatives in that situation. Or, if all such persons were excluded, the whole management of the funds would in many instances fall into the hands of one or two individuals — of an agent, for example. Any one acquainted with Ireland will readily understand to what a system

of fraud, and favouritism, and jobbing, either of these alternatives would necessarily lead.

Again, by adopting the baronial or county plan, the great evil which attaches to the English system, namely the law of settlement, and its consequent expenses, would at any rate be greatly diminished.

But, whatever details may be decided on as best, I am perfectly convinced that *some* plan of legal relief to the poor must speedily be enacted : and what alone, I firmly believe, has prevented its being already passed, is the singular vacillation of Mr. O'Connell upon this subject, and the not very creditable opposition of the Irish land-owners. These latter, in my opinion, entertain very unfounded, or at least exaggerated, apprehensions of the burden that the Poor Laws would entail upon Ireland.

To the country at large, they would be far from being a burden, even in a pecuniary point of view. The pauper population is at present supported by the country : at least I believe it is only in sudden visitations of great distress,

from disease or the failure of the potato crop, that any considerable number ever die of starvation. True, they are supported badly, and in a great measure by the class but a little removed above themselves. But no one would wish to see them kept in a state of luxury under the system of Poor Laws; still less would any friend of the country, any lover of humanity, advocate the expediency of their continuing to weigh down the indigent but warm-hearted class immediately above them to their own level.

The expense of their support is borne at present by the charitable alone; whereas, under an equitable administration of a legal relief, it would be distributed over the whole wealth of the nation, and the absentees would thus be subjected to the only tax which seems both just and practicable: while the profitable labour of the hundreds of thousands, who at present do nothing in return for their support, would be gained to the country.

But it is neither within my powers nor my

intention to discuss this great subject in all its bearings. I may, however, perhaps be permitted to mention one or two collateral advantages, which I do not remember to have seen so much dwelt on as they appear to me to merit.

I cannot help thinking, that, were a judicious system of Poor Laws established in Ireland, the consciousness of having, as it were, a lien upon the soil for their sustenance would attach the lower orders to the land from which they derived such support, as also to the right of property which secured it to them.

Again, I conceive that their introduction would greatly contribute to the gradual extinction of the race of *very, very small* farmers ; who would be much more profitably engaged, both for themselves and the country, as agricultural labourers, in constant employment, at a fair rate of wages. At present, the procuring of daily employment is much too precarious to permit the Irish peasants to trust entirely to this source of subsistence. They are

therefore forced, in self-defence, to take a bit of land, at a most ruinous rent, without the capital, or other means, for properly cultivating it.

A farm of fifty or one hundred acres is split and subdivided into many holdings, as low as one or two acres; for which enormous rents are offered and sometimes paid. These patches are, of course, tilled almost entirely for potatoes, just enough to keep life in the family. But if, either from laziness or poverty, sufficient manure be not put into the ground, or a bad season come on, and the potatoes consequently fail, the whole pauper population is necessarily reduced to a state of starvation, without any means of support to look to, except charity or worse.

Now, supposing that, through the agency of the Poor Laws, the opportunity of constant employment were put within the reach of all the industrious, this precarious system of minute farms would gradually disappear; and their present occupants would become much

happier and better citizens, as agricultural labourers.

I have heard it objected, "Where will you find employment for such a number?"

Employment! Why, there is no country which abounds in such sources of employment as Ireland. The land at present under cultivation is not rendered half so productive as it might be; and, if it were properly tilled, would take most of the disposable labourers. Then the roads, to be brought into and kept in proper repair, would occupy all the superfluous labour for the next dozen years. Besides which, there are new roads to be made — canals or railways to be constructed — bogs to be drained — mountains to be brought under cultivation. And, if only mischievous men would allow the country to remain quiet for some time, so as to offer perfect security for life and property, English capital would, I am certain, rapidly flow in, and establish manufactures, that would effectually provide work for the present redundant population.

But the absorbing interest of this subject has too long detained me from the vaunted beauties of the Shannon, on whose broad waters the reader may have perhaps forgotten that I embarked, some few pages back. These beauties are very considerable. Must I however confess that, from description, I had anticipated its scenery to be still grander, and more romantic ?

The shores are usually formed of low, undulating hills, which include some of the richest soil in Ireland, and were at this season covered with most luxuriant crops of corn. There are also many handsome residences scattered along the banks, such as Mr. Spring Rice's new-made demesne, and the Knight of Glyn's fine castle. About half-way, the river spreads out into a wide expanse ; from which an extensive bay stretches almost up to Clare, which Spenser may well be supposed to have had in his recollection, when he describes this noble river as

“ The spacious *Shenan* spreading like a sea.”

Below, it again contracts and becomes more beautiful ; the shores are loftier, and occasionally clothed with fine timber, which exhibits no traces of western breezes. Altogether, this part of the Shannon cannot fail to charm the stranger : but its scenery partakes rather of the pleasing and beautiful than of the grand or romantic.

I landed in Tarbert Bay with a few other passengers ; by far the majority going on to Kilrush. Cars were waiting on the beach to conduct us to the town, which is about a mile distant : and where I was excellently accommodated at Mrs. M'Mahon's neat little inn.

The steamboat I had just left belongs to the Inland Navigation Company, who have lately received a large grant from Government, for the improvement of the Upper and Lower Shannon ; part of which sum they very properly intend to lay out on building a pier at Tarbert, where it is much wanted.

Tarbert is a better kind of Irish village, having one or two broad streets, with some

rather neat houses, occasionally occupied by bathers. It entirely belongs to the Leslie family, who have a pretty place close to it. Its environs are extremely pleasing; to enjoy which, I dined early, and then rambled on the cliffs, that command a long reach of the lower part of the Shannon, nearly to its mouth.

At my feet was the deep, winding bay of Tarbert, well known as the most secure anchorage in the river, where ships often lie for days or weeks, waiting for a favourable wind. Before me, on the further side of the broad estuary, stretched a long line of the coast of Clare, backed by a lofty rampart of dark mountains: and, almost opposite, I could distinctly perceive the white houses of Kilrush, which, at this distance, had an appearance of great neatness. Immediately in front of the modest bathing place, lay the sacred island of Scattery, erst the abode of St. Senanus; with its mysterious round tower, sole but striking monument of the skill, of the faith, of a forgotten race. Many other towns and bays were within my

ken : and numerous boats and vessels dimpled the surface of the scarcely ruffled water.

It was just the scene and hour that “wakes the wish, and melts the heart”—summoning the past to blend in gentle unison with the objects present to the eye of sense ; and exciting the mental vision to fond imaginings of the shadowy future.

Chewing the cud of such sad yet sweet fancies, I lingered on the cliffs until the very last hues of a most lovely sunset had long faded in the western sky ;

“ And as I watched the line of light, that plays
Along the smooth wave tow’rds the burning west,
I longed to tread that golden path of rays,
As if ’twould lead to some bright isle of rest !”

The next day, Sunday, August 11th, I attended service at the neat though small church, about half a mile from the village. The congregation was larger and more respectable than might have been expected in so Catholic a neighbourhood ; and the duty very well performed. In the afternoon, contrary to

my usual practice and principles, I was induced to take a car over to Ballybunnion, of whose magnificent caves I had accidentally heard the most extraordinary accounts.

The distance is about twelve miles, the road very indifferent, and affording no objects of beauty or interest, except an occasional glimpse of the Shannon, until within two or three miles of Ballybunnion, when the wide, open bay, called the Mouth of the Shannon — the mountains of Dingle and Brandon Head — and, still more distant, M'Gillicuddy's Reeks, above Killarney — come severally and finely into view.

It being a most delicious evening, hundreds of holyday folk were strolling along the cliff, whom I was most anxious to join. I therefore drove up to the apology for an inn that had been pointed out to me, secured what accommodations I could, and, having ordered a very late dinner, proceeded immediately to see as much as possible that evening of the cliffs and caves, in order to judge whether it would be worth

my while to devote another day to their further inspection. I rambled for about three miles and three hours along the cliffs and shores, and was so much gratified with what I *did* see, and, at the same time, so perfectly convinced that I had seen comparatively nothing of the real beauties or curiosities of the place, that I at once resolved to remain the next day and examine them from the water, which I found to be the only satisfactory method.

I never in my life had less cause to repent a decision. They are incomparably the most beautiful marine caves I know of in any country, and in my opinion are among the most interesting natural objects in Great Britain. As I explored them so much better the next day, it is unnecessary to describe further my first impression; but I must mention the very curious scene of another kind that I this day witnessed, and which I was given to understand is enacted almost every fine Sunday's evening throughout the summer.

Close under the village of Ballybunnion lies

a beautiful bay, which, at low water, offers a great extent of the finest sands possible. The cliffs which enclose it to the south are entirely of sand; and on one of the most prominent stands a lofty and very picturesque old tower, once the residence of kings. But the northern side of the bay is bounded by the abrupt and perpendicular termination of the clay-slate rocks, which compose the coast for some way northwards, and in which the caves are all situated. These rocks are here about one hundred feet in height, perfectly perpendicular, and of various and beautiful colours. Their lower part is perforated into numberless caverns, of greater or lesser dimensions; but the largest and finest is only approachable at low water.

These "cavern cells" are in the day time given up exclusively to the women, wherein to bathe, or rather to dress and undress; for, though there are one or two caves in which they might, if they chose, bathe at certain times of the tide, most of the females seem to prefer the "open sea," where their evolutions

are usually watched, though at a respectful distance, by hundreds of the other sex. For the credit of the customs of the West, it may perhaps be necessary to add, that these nereids are provided with decorous dressing gowns during their marine ablutions.

On a Sunday evening these caverns are turned into ball^{*} rooms, where, on the smooth but unelastic sand, may be witnessed every kind of Irish dance, in the greatest perfection. Some caves serve as stables for the horses, while many are converted into whisky shops. But the favourite place for drinking and carousing after the fatigues of the jig seemed to be a primitive species of tent, formed by a blanket or counterpane, sloping down from the sheer wall of rock, under whose low canopy it was just possible to creep in and out. The scene was altogether most singular and picturesque.

While the sun was setting, I stood as near the mouth of the lowest cave as the retreating tide would allow me—

“ To take my farewell of the parting day:
Far in the deep the sun his glory hides,
A streak of gold the sea and sky divides,
The purple clouds their amber linings show,
And edged with flames rolls every wave below.”

The entrance of this cavern to seaward was formed of enormous, natural arches, whose massive pillars sank deep beneath the wave. The western sun appeared exactly underneath this arch, and flung a tide of golden rays across the waters, into the deep recesses of the cavern. Some groups were standing in its broad, red light; the figures of others were dimly seen moving to the various measure of the dance, within the further cavern's gloom; while from either side the booming swell of the retiring waves, and the universal sound of merriment from far and near, echoed in strange concord through the sea-cave's rocky vault. It was long before I could tear myself away from the spot.

But, when again I strolled down, to gaze for half an hour before retiring to rest, upon

“ The firmament that glowed with living sapphires,”

how changed was the scene ! The revellers had all disappeared — the voice of mirth had ceased — I was the only wanderer on that lone shore — and no music broke the stilly silence of the lovely night, save the plaintive murmurings of the rippling wave.

It was from this same bay that I started the next morning in a boat with four rowers, accompanied by a Roman Catholic clergyman, and our intelligent young landlord, Mr. Adam, who kindly went with us to ensure our seeing every thing that merited observation. A finer day could not have been chosen : and the vast Atlantic lay as still as an inland lake, which we soon found to be indispensable for our entering many of the caves.

They extend about two miles northwards from the little Bay of Ballybunnion. The cliffs for this distance vary from eighty to one hundred feet to nearly three hundred feet in height, and are quite perpendicular. They are principally composed of clay-slate, of very unequal substance and hardness, in which the ceaseless

waves of the Atlantic and the action of the atmosphere have worn away the softer parts, and left the more durable. Beyond this clay-slate formation a kind of sandstone comes in, which seems sufficiently homogeneous ; so that either the whole resists, or the whole gives way, and consequently it contains no caves.

Immediately upon rounding the point of the Bay, we came upon a succession of caverns, which called forth our warmest admiration ; but which, we were assured (and truly) were nothing in comparison of those beyond. This part of the coast is composed of a tolerably compact slaty rock, as steep as the side of a house, and about one hundred feet high. Almost the whole of the lower portion is hollowed out into caverns of greatly varying dimensions and forms, and usually supported by gigantic columns of rock.

Into most of these we entered, and discovered something new to admire in each. The water in them was seldom less than ten feet in depth, but much oftener twenty or thirty feet, and of

the most crystal purity imaginable. The sea was so calm as to admit of our penetrating their inmost windings, without any danger to our frail bark; and the day, being brilliantly bright, occasioned an endless diversity of lights and shades within their vaulted recesses.

Further on, we entered into a small, deep cove, completely enclosed within lofty and perpendicular crags, surmounted by the ruins of an old castle. From this cove we passed into a very large cavern, supported as usual by immense natural buttresses, and which, after extending some distance within the cliff, communicates, by a singular tunnel-shaped opening through the superincumbent rock of soil, with the fields above. We passed through this cavern beneath another entrance, into a more extensive bay, in which stood several insulated masses of rock, of different forms and sizes; but all evidently separated from the adjoining cliffs, by the intermediate parts having been washed away. They are exactly what are

called "stacks" on the coast of Caithness, in Scotland.

The largest of these I should estimate at about one hundred feet in height, by twice that breadth and length. It rises perpendicularly from the water, at a considerable distance from the shore; and is completely perforated up to half its height, so as to form a most splendid natural arch of triumph, under which we rowed. But it would be endless to detail the various objects of interest that here caught our attention.

Soon after leaving this bay, the strata, which had hitherto been horizontal, appeared inclined at an angle of about forty-five degrees; their edges being exposed to the sea. The caverns consequently assumed quite a new character. One in particular, into which we entered, struck me as very curious. It is nearly one hundred feet long, open at both ends; and so regularly constructed, that a perpendicular section of it would exhibit a perfect right-angled triangle, of which the sea

would form one side, the sheer wall of rock the other, and the inclined stratum, or roof, the hypotenuse. This roof of slate is nearly as smooth and regular as the art of man could make it. The adjoining coast also partakes of the same slate-roofed character; a single, unbroken, and naked slab of rock running from the water to the top of the cliff.

At length, however, we reached the part of the coast, where are situated the finest caverns of all. The cliffs here are loftier than usual; the strata, also, are, in general, much thinner, and quite horizontal, so as to have the appearance of layers of bricks, or tiles. The tide was as yet rather too high for us to enter the most extensive cave, named, after the number of seals that come to breed there, "the Seal Cave:" so, reserving it until our return, we passed on to one which the boatmen called the "Pigeon Cave," from the flocks of wild rock-pigeons which frequent it.

Much as my admiration had been before excited, I must confess that I was quite taken

by surprise with the extraordinary beauty and grandeur of this most magnificent cavern. We entered it by a spacious portal, worn out of the perpendicular face of the cliff, and supported by several huge columns of rock, which closed together, in an irregular but most picturesque arch, high over our heads. After a comparatively narrow passage of forty or fifty yards, the cave swelled out into a dome of the noblest proportions, nearly circular in its form, and converging from all sides, so as to form a vast natural cupola. The summit of this splendid canopy of rock, as well as the further sides, were lost in partial darkness ; while from the arched opening, by which we had entered, a flood of glorious light pouring in, illumined the various tints and hues that adorned the walls of this ocean grotto.

For, as if to make it perfect, the rock was strongly impregnated with sulphur and copper, whose exudations tinged the sides and roof with every imaginable colour, producing a pictorial effect that can scarcely be conceived.

The water also, though very deep, was of most pellucid clearness; exposing *here* a silvery floor of shell and sand; and *there*, a mimic forest of each kind of sea-weed. Staffa is certainly more curious and interesting from its basaltic columns: but, exquisitely beautiful as it confessedly is, even Fingal's Cave must, I think, yield to this for beauty, if not for grandeur.

We lingered long in this scene of enchantment: admired, and re-admired, its form, its proportions, its colours—the rock, the water, the light, the shade, all came in for a share of our enthusiastic approbation. More than one Irish song was sung: and how I longed for some well remembered friends to wake the echoes with their notes of melody! What a glorious hall for music, particularly for wind instruments! A single bugle would have been invaluable: whereas we had nothing but a gun, which made noise enough, indeed, but not of the most harmonious description.

It was, of course, impossible to resist drink-

ing a drop "to the long life" of so fair a spot : after which, unanimously agreeing that it merited a grander title than "the Pigeon's Cave," we, with due ceremonies and libations, christened it "Neptune's Hall ;" and I question much if his marine godship possess many caverns more worthy of the name, within his wide domain.

We at length left it by a smaller passage than the first, which only just admitted our boat ; and, upon emerging, found ourselves in a very small but highly perpendicular cove, hemmed in by magnificent perpendicular rocks, that rose in a circle around us : while directly in front stood an equally lofty column of rock, gradually tapering from its base, like an Egyptian obelisk. Its strata being remarkably thin and horizontal, look exactly like piles of bricks, and towards the summit assume the appearance of masonry : for which reason it bears the appropriate name of "the Devil's Castle." It is about two hundred yards from the shore ; and, from time immemorial, has

been the chosen and inaccessible breeding-place of a pair of eagles.

We thence stretched across to an old ruin, called Lick Castle, built on an extraordinary promontory of sandstone, which juts far out into the sea; and is only divided from the mainland by a very deep chasm, not more than eight or ten feet wide, with sides as regular as if chiselled by man. Here we landed, and examined the ruin; admired the prospect, and watched the myriads of cormorants and gulls that were clamorously pursuing the unfortunate shoals of herring fry on all sides.

Then, leaving our boat, we walked for a mile or two along the cliffs, to see a chasm, called Poul a Phuca (signifying, I believe, "the Hole of the Goblin"). It is a considerable fissure in the ground, forty or fifty yards from the shore, and sinking perpendicularly down to the level of the sea, with which it has a subterranean communication. It is exactly similar in character to the extraordinary chasms called "Loups," near Cape Wrath, on the north-

western coast of Scotland, but is greatly inferior to them in every respect, and was hardly worth going to see.

On our way homewards, we stopped to examine the Seal's Cave, which the tide had not permitted us to enter in the morning. This cave, as I before said, owes its name to the number of seals that resort to it in the breeding season, when they are killed with clubs for the sake of their skins and oil. It penetrates a very long way directly into the bowels of the earth; and has many lateral branches. We followed it for about a hundred yards, and should have advanced further; but my Roman Catholic friend became frightened—as indeed were some others of the party—and implored our instant return. It did not appear to me worth while to persevere, except for curiosity.

Soon after entering, the passage became so narrow that we could touch the rock on both sides: and we were in such utter darkness as to be obliged to light our torches, made of bog-pine, which gave a most brilliant

splendour over the low, dark, vault of the cave. At the extremity of our subterraneous voyage, we entered a lateral branch, which speedily proved so contracted, as to oblige us to put back.

There was a dispute as to which was the right passage—and the steersman wanted much to take a wrong turn—there was a doubt whether the lights would go out—the Parish Priest begged hard to return—the boatmen became alarmed, and began screaming at and scolding each other; and, what was worst, in their flurry pushed about our light canvass-bottomed boat much more violently than I liked.

Then, calm as it was, the sea caused a little swell up these tortuous passages, which heaved our frail boat against the rocky sides, and made a strange, unearthly sound, as it boomed through these long galleries. Then there was the pitchy darkness, and, above all, the insupportable sense of confinement!—all these circumstances contributed to produce little bit

of a scene : and the reader may be assured, that there was more than one who most gladly hailed again the "holy light, offspring of heaven, first born ;" which seemed to beam with peculiar effulgence, after our temporary imprisonment in the nether regions. The priest unconsciously expressed his feelings, almost in the very language of Ajax :

" If we must perish, we thy will obey,
But let us perish in the light of day."

My greatest fear, during this adventure, had been lest the boatmen, when they lost their steadiness and presence of mind, should stave our very slight bark against the rocks. Her bottom was only of well-tarred canvass, stretched over the ribs of the keel ; and therefore a collision with a single sharp rock might sink us in a moment : fortunately, however, their angles were all so smoothed by the constant action of the water that she was not in the least injured.

After this little scene, we paddled quietly homewards, revisiting on our way "Neptune's

Hall," as well as some other caves, which had before particularly struck us; and, about four o'clock, landed under Ballybunnion, after one of the most gratifying excursions I ever enjoyed.

I have been thus minute in detailing what I this day saw, from finding how little these caverns are known beyond their immediate neighbourhood; whereas they appear to me to be richly deserving the tourist's notice. Of this, at least, I feel very sure, that, for variety, beauty, grandeur, and extent, they are unequalled by any sea-caves in our islands. They may also be seen at no great sacrifice either of time or money: the price which I had agreed to pay for my boat was five shillings; to this I added a *buona mano* of half-a-crown, in token of my approbation of the crew, which more than satisfied them: and the whole expedition scarcely occupied six hours. I should, however, warn the tourist, that the sea must be perfectly calm, or he will not be able to enter the caves; and that the day ought to be perfectly bright, or much of their beauty will be lost.

Hitherto, indeed, Ballybunnion has been little frequented, perhaps, from the almost total absence of any accommodation for strangers. There are two or three comfortable residences, which are occupied by respectable families of the neighbourhood, during the summer : but, excepting these, the village affords nothing but a few rather better sort of cabins, where the lodgers must bring both bedding and provisions.

This year, a person of the name of Adam has taken for three months the old Mansion-house, belonging to the proprietor of the place, Mr. Hareng, a minor, and an absentee ; but which has usually been inhabited for the season by Mr. Leonard, of Listowell, the lessee of the greater part of the property. Adam is an intelligent, well-meaning, and civil young man : and, if he could obtain a lease of the house, would, I doubt not, make it answer to himself and the public.

Indeed, Ballybunnion seemed to me to possess great capabilities for a spirited pro-

prietor to develop. Its situation is beautiful, in the centre of a spacious and fine bay : the sands are firm and extensive ; the water as pure and clear as any in the world ; the coast abounding in fish, though but little taken ; and with a good salmon river within three or four miles. When to these inducements is added its position between Limerick and Killarney, and the inexhaustible interest of its romantic caves, I do not think it unreasonable to expect that Ballybunnion would be much frequented during the summer months, if it were only better known and could supply better accommodations.

Perhaps though, I am speaking with something of the enthusiasm of a first discovery : so will proceed with the journal of my tour.

